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THEOLOGY AS SCIENCE

PUBLISHED BY

JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS, GLASGOW,

Publishers to the University.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

New York, - - *The Macmillan Co.*
London, - - - *Simpkin, Hamilton and Co.*
Cambridge, - - *Macmillan and Bowes.*
Edinburgh, - - *Douglas and Foulis.*

MDCCCXCVIII.

Theology as Science

and its

Present Position and Prospects in the Reformed Church

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

By

W. HASTIE, D.D.

Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow

Glasgow

James MacLehose and Sons

Publishers to the University

1899

Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Διὰ τοῦτο πᾶς γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν ὅμοιός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότῃ, ὅστις ἐκβαλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ καινὰ καὶ παλαιά.

'Theology is the haven of the Sciences.'—Lord Bacon.

GLASGOW: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS BY
ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS little volume contains three Introductory Lectures, which special reasons have induced me to publish, although they were not specially written with a view to publication. The first two were delivered to my Divinity students on the first two days of the present session, as introductory to the work in which we are at present engaged. Our recent sad bereavement in the University made it incumbent on me to refer, at the close of the Opening Lecture, to the deeply felt loss we had sustained by the death of Principal Caird, who continued to the last to be our "praesidium et dulce decus" in Theology. My remarks, after appearing in the leading Glasgow and Edinburgh newspapers, brought me most sympathetic letters from distinguished friends and pupils of Dr. Caird, all approving of my representation of his theological position, and in some cases strongly urging me to publish the Lecture in which they were contained. I accordingly sent it to press, but found it necessary to add the second Lecture that the discussion might be less incomplete.

For the same reason I have also added the Inaugural Lecture delivered three years ago, when I entered upon my work in this University. Under the pressure of my duties at the time, I did not think of publishing it then, according to the usual custom, and it is reproduced here, not only because of its relevancy as so far completing this discussion, but because some passages had to be omitted during its delivery from want of time, on account of which it was not wholly reported.

I have preserved the direct forms of address, because my primary aim is to put these Lectures into the hands of my students as a sort of general introduction to theological thinking, and to be relieved of the need of repeating them in the class-room. But others who are interested in our work may be also interested in this comparatively full exposition of the theological standpoint on which it is conducted.

It will be at once understood that this is only a preface to further discussion, which will appear as opportunity may allow. Sympathetic readers will not fail to see through what is presented in general outline here, that in all my theological work I have no higher nor other aim than to ascertain, vindicate, and apply anew the fundamental and essential principles of our National Religion.

W. H.

University of Glasgow,
December, 1898.

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I.

THEOLOGY AS SCIENCE.

October 31, 1898.

GENTLEMEN,—The first word of the Session has already been spoken in the Divinity Hall by my learned colleague, your new Professor of Ecclesiastical History. Cordially welcoming you again to the Hall to-day, I invite you to turn with me, at once, in the earnest spirit that should always animate the Student of Divinity, to our own special subject, Systematic Theology, or the study of the system of religious truth long embodied in Christian doctrine, but demanding, more than ever, new scientific elaboration.

This study, coming to us here again, recommended by many a hallowed and venerable association, will form a continuation of all your previous intellectual efforts and discipline in Arts and Divinity, and it should call forth, as it will demand, the constant exercise of your best powers. In entering upon it, or resuming it, it behoves us all to carry with us a deep

sense of its importance and its reality. If Theology, regarded as scientifically systematized truth about God, be at all possible, its interest must be supreme over that of all other studies, for it brings us immediately into conscious relation with the Supreme; it puts us, as no other study can, face to face with the Divine, with the Infinite and the Eternal, with God Himself in His living personality and power. From the very dawn of thought till now—from the first rise of the consciousness in man of a life higher in character and aspiration than that of nature around him, in all its wonderful but evanescent forms, and through all the struggle and strain, all the conflict and sorrow, the manifold failure and mortality of the past—the human race has ever lifted its faith, its hope, and its love, above things seen and temporal to things unseen and eternal, and sought its last consolation and satisfaction in them. This is what is shown by the long course of the religious history of mankind, beginning with the dim and crude imaginings of the primitive races, up through many an ancient faith, with its peculiar elaborated ceremonialism, to the manifold and varied forms of religious life that still survive to-day. And what a marvellous impressive and fascinating history this has been—with its deep brooding over the primary mystery of life, its earnest and often passionate wrestling with inward agony and outward

oppression, its bloody sweats of anxiety and apprehension in midnight gloom, its fire-baptisms of torturing cruelty and martyrdom, its agonies of prayer and its triumphant paens of praise, its heroic spirit of sacrifice and self-surrender, its embodiments of the sublime and beautiful in its votive works of art, its mastery, elevation, and government of peoples and nations, and its elaboration of highest thought in its many systems of theology! No one, in glancing even superficially at this mighty and fruitful movement of the Holy Spirit in man throughout all the ages, can fail to be touched with something of its own enthusiasm, unless his heart be dead to all higher things. And however its forms may have changed, and however much of imperfect or mistaken effort it may yet have left behind, he must be blind indeed to what is most inspiring in the spiritual life and tendencies of the hour, who does not see in it still a mighty presence and an endless potentiality.

Holding, as we do, the only view possible in the face of modern thought, that Christianity is the one divine religion and the substance of the one true theology, we may confine our view, in considering the theological development and the prospect of the hour, to the experience of Christendom. Its whole history in this relation has been nothing short of marvellous, when, from our own view-point, we take its theological literature into account, and con-

sider the immense productivity, the genuine originality of thought, and the spiritual energy of mind displayed by the great cloud of witnesses to the truth of the Christian revelation, constituted by church fathers, scholastic theologians, Protestant reformers, and free modern thinkers in theology. It is customary to regard the Middle Ages, when the power of the Roman Church in Western Europe was universal and supreme, as the period in which Christian theology culminated, and not a few regard the subsequent theological movement as either mere unreflective reaction from the rise of modern thought, or the continued disintegration of the old faith, in the more advanced schools, under its influence. A sharp contrast is thus often drawn between the old ages of faith and the new age of science, and it has come to be widely held that the former has been continually giving way before the latter, and is now at last more rapidly vanishing in its growing light. This position is variously formulated and discussed by the Positivists and Agnostics, the Naturalists, Secularists, and Pessimists of our day, and it receives its most pointed expression in the denial that Theology is science at all, or that it is intellectually compatible with the virtually universal and exclusive scientific habit of the modern mind. This formulation of the issue in question, as that of a direct and fundamental antagonism between

all theology and science, is the most concentrated expression of the intellectual opposition which the student of theology, who lives in the light of the modern day, has to encounter at the outset. We shall have to deal immediately with the various phases of this opposition now in vogue, and formulated as the atheistic or anti-theistic theories of our time. But, to-day, as introductory to these discussions, I would confine our view to the fundamental question thus indicated—to the claim of Theology to be still regarded and treated as a science, to the grounds on which it may assert its scientific character, to its right to a place at all in the hierarchy or organism of the modern sciences, and consequently to its requirement of the scientific habit of mind in all effective prosecution of its task.

1. Is Theology, then, a science; and, if so, on what grounds does its claim to be so regarded establish itself? It is manifest at the outset that Theology can only be a science if it furnish the student with rationally established knowledge in its own sphere, knowledge which is not otherwise attainable without it, and which is of such nature and importance as to give its cultivation and exposition the dignity and rank of science. There is no dispute as to the fundamental position that all science is knowledge, and that it is *as such* the product of the exercise of

the faculty of knowledge—call it perception, or understanding, or reason, as you will—applied under the guidance of a legitimate method to its proper objects. All true knowledge has ever arisen in this way, and it can only be vindicated as knowledge when it can be shown that it has arisen through such a process. We may, however, at once clearly distinguish, both in the individual and the race, between pre-scientific knowledge and scientific knowledge proper. Pre-scientific knowledge is the natural knowledge of common life, which begins with the first perceptions of the child, and grows through ordinary observation until it accumulates into the body of common-sense cognitions which usually occupy the unscientific mind, and practically regulate the common habits and activities of every-day life. Scientific knowledge is a later product and acquirement, which is formed on the basis of this common knowledge, by correction, purification, and extension of it. Scientific knowledge brings no absolutely new faculty into play, but it sharpens, guides, and multiplies the exercise of the cognitive faculties in their proper application. It gives them clearer consciousness of themselves, while it gradually reaches greater self-certainty, and more logically methodizes their activity in the pursuit of truth. Scientific knowledge is thus entirely reflective, reasoned, systematized knowledge, but it deals all the time, only in greater distinctness

and differentiation, with the very same kind of objects that were manifested and so far grasped by the pre-scientific mind. Its proper function is not to create new objects or to discover worlds entirely out of relation with the old world of immediate perception, but rather to explain that world by getting to its essential reality and its constitutive causes, and so to transform it into an intelligible world, now seen enlarged, deepened, and transfigured in the higher light of pure thought or reflective reason. In one respect the pre-scientific world of common sense is the more real and the more necessary, because it exists independent of the particular mind perceiving it, and is universal to all as the immediate and indispensable condition of their life; whereas the scientific world subsists only in the mind, exists only to thought, and is the intellectual possession in its fulness only of the few. The value of science to human life lies mainly in this, that it reflects in the mirror of the mind the real order of existence in its truest ascertainment; gives new power and security to the human will in dealing with it; and thus at once enriches and spiritualizes human life by giving it, not only a command of the forces of the natural world, but a higher consciousness of itself in utilizing them in its every-day life and relations.

The distinction between common unscientific knowledge and scientific knowledge—or pre-scientific know-

ledge and scientific knowledge proper—is therefore one of quality and degree rather than of nature and kind. Pre-scientific knowledge is mainly the work of the imagination still absorbed in sense, and it consists largely of the transference of mere subjective images or fancies to the objects of external perception which are thus invested with qualities and relations that do not really belong to them. This gives a certain poetic and mythical character to objects, which, on that stage of knowledge, are commonly personified and animated, and made in the image of the subject-mind thus apprehending them. This is the character of the particular knowledge of children, and of all primitive peoples, and it accounts at once for its limitations and its errors. But as progress is made towards the scientific standpoint, knowledge becomes more and more objective, through the attempt, under a higher distinction, to know things as they are in themselves. Its first step onward then consists in the rejection of mere inward ideas or fancies about objects, the purgation of knowledge from this unconscious subjective addition, and the establishment of an objective method under the sway of which knowledge now assumes a more perfect form and thereafter rapidly grows in extent. And while all knowledge taken by itself is purely theoretical and intellectual, it necessarily and immediately acts and reacts on the whole beliefs, activities, and conduct of life. The contrast

between belief and conduct, under the two periods and forms of knowledge, thus comes to be as marked and significant as that between the two forms or degrees of knowledge themselves. In the pre-scientific period belief is unquestioning, superstitious, excessive; action is timid, hesitating, arbitrary; conduct is spasmodic, sensuous, uncertain. In the scientific period, on the other hand, belief becomes purified, simplified, illuminated; conduct becomes methodized, moralized, and directed to more universal ends; action becomes freer, more enterprising, more self-reliant. Thus the whole activity and order of life become transformed under the power of purified and extended knowledge, until the old becomes scarcely recognizable, and but little of it seems longer tenable in the light of the new.

I shall not dwell now upon the individual and social struggles which are inevitably passed through in every community where this transition from lower and limited knowledge, with its kindred accompanying beliefs and institutions, to higher and wider knowledge, with its severe searching of old traditions and its yearning for a new and freer order of life. Enough is it for our present purpose to see how this general contrast between the old ages of faith and the new age of science—which might be greatly expanded and variously applied in detail—explains at once the apparent shrinkage of theology in modern times, where it has not kept pace with contemporary scientific

progress, and its relegation by extreme recent scientists and sceptics to the antiquated beliefs and methods of the past. Let us take the claim of Theology to be science sharply from this point of view, and see now whether this is a legitimate mode of dealing with it, and disposing of it. It will be seen at once that everything turns upon the nature, the meaning, and the range of science proper, as to whether this exclusion of theology from its sphere is scientifically tenable and rational in itself. Now, if theology be defined as the science, or methodized knowledge of God as the Infinite, Eternal, and Supernatural Being, who at once constitutes the ultimate ground of all things, and transcends all things; and if science be limited to the methodized knowledge of the finite phenomena that fall within the range of sense-perception—then theology as such is from the outset and all through impossible as a science. God, as the Infinite, Eternal, and Transcendent Personality, is not presented as a particular external object in the sphere of sense along with and distinct from other objects, and His Being and relations cannot be thus immediately and sensibly discovered and apprehended. Astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, botany, zoology, and anthropology, have each their distinct and separate sections or departments of physical phenomena to study and elucidate by direct observation and experiment, but Theology cannot be

co-ordinated with them as dealing in the same way with another different section or division of facts of the same kind. Theology, as such, either deals with *all* physical facts and phenomena in a peculiar way of its own, or it deals physically with *none* of them, seeing that they are all taken up in this way, by particular physical sciences, so that no nook of nature is left unoccupied by physical science or handed over specially to Theology as its sole domain. There is not even a far-off telescopic or spectroscopic heaven in or beyond the most distant nebulae on the utmost confines of space, reserved for the theologian alone; and even if there were, it would furnish but poor matter for Theology to work upon. In the primitive, crude, pre-scientific period, the lower natural religions did, indeed, hold that view, in a sort of instinctive, unreflective way. Thus the Fetish worshipper sought and found, and in Central Africa still finds, his god in a particular sensible object—a peculiar stone, the gnarled branch of a tree, a pebble, a river, a mountain, a lion's tail, a snake; and even in higher forms of faith this is still found in the idol, the image of a god or goddess, an amulet, a sacred spot, a miraculous shrine, a temple, a cross, a bit of bread. But all this has been exploded in the scientific age, when these objects have been daringly examined one by one, and found to be as physical and natural throughout as other objects, and they have thus been ruthlessly

divested of the exceptional divinity with which a pious, imaginative devotion had long clothed them.

Theology, then, cannot take rank as a mere physical science, nor can it be elaborated as a separate science by the special methods of the physical sciences. This is the fundamental error of the point of view which Lord Gifford laid down for the regulation of his magnificent gift to our Universities of his Lectureships on "Natural Theology," and it has been the cause of much confusion and weakness in dealing with them. He lays it down as an essential condition that "the subject should be treated as a strictly natural science like Astronomy or Chemistry," and, at the same time, he defines the subject as "The knowledge of God, the Infinite, the All, the First and Only Cause, the One and the Sole Substance, the Sole Being, the Sole Reality and the Sole Existence." But these two things, thus defined in antithetical terms of physics and metaphysics, are quite incompatible and even contradictory when logically analyzed, and they can only be held together by an artificial externally reflecting mind. Natural science, as in astronomy and chemistry, deals only with determinate physical phenomena, and can never by its own specific method reach the Infinite, the Ultimate Cause, the One and the Sole Substance of All Being. This is the truth of Positivism, which strictly applies the method of natural science to its proper objects, and

rightly refuses to carry it beyond them. If we are to pass beyond them it must be by another method, or at least in another way, or along another path. God, the Infinite, Ultimate Substance and Causation, cannot be sensibly handled, grasped, or experimented upon; He is not to be weighed like the mountains in scales, or like the hills in a balance, although He weighs and measures them all. The failure to recognize this position was the weakness of the old Natural Theology, which assumed God as an absolutely transcendent Being, while yet professing to deal with Him as if he were an object of sense, and to prove Him by observation of mere natural facts. But having actually found God through the higher spiritual medium, nature then becomes interpretable, and receives a higher intelligibility when regarded as His work. In this way of thinking about nature, however, we have already transcended the sphere of the physical, and have embraced it within a higher spiritual conception, which is not the product of mere induction from particular physical facts. Theology then, and Natural Theology in particular, is not a physical or natural science, nor is its method that of the mere physical or natural sciences, as the writers of Bridgewater and kindred treatises, on the standpoint of Paley, naïvely assume. In maintaining this we really concede nothing to the natural scientist but his own indubitable right within his proper

sphere; and if we are to overcome his negation, we must rise above that sphere of knowledge into a higher, in order to find in it the true basis and right of theology and its proper method.

2. Above the Physical Sciences in the system of knowledge, we have the Historical Sciences, and here at the first glance we see that Theology is largely at home. The characteristic of the historical sciences, in distinction from the physical sciences, is that they deal with spiritual reality, with the manifestation and development of the life of humanity in time. I shall not pause now to inquire whether this spiritual life of man in time arises out of the lower physical forms of existence by internal evolution, or is superinduced upon them by new creative energy; it is enough at present to note its distinctive spiritual character, and its essential superiority to the lower order of being. It is characterized by the special element of self-consciousness, free reason, self-determining will all through, even while resting at every point on the lower physical unconscious order. This world of history appears at first sight to be altogether unreal, unsubstantial, evanescent, because it is continually changing, passing away, and renewing itself in time. But when we look at it more closely, its reality stands out ever more strongly, and its living interest gradually towers forth above the mere mechanical

and inert world of matter, which is at the highest subordinated and subsidiary to it. Nature is ever becoming a new world in history, a very real world indeed, in which all the forces and material of nature are being constantly used up and find their real end. And what a vast, mighty, all-comprehending world this of History is! How much greater and grander the spiritual life of man in time than all the wonders of the lower world of space, or even of the starry heavens, when we look at it closely! It comprehends the rise, organization, and change of all the social life of humanity—all tribal unions, all association of peoples, all nationalities, all kingdoms, empires, and governments, the whole movement of civilization, the marvellous progress of art, of knowledge, of literature and science in widest range. It is the life of this great world of unnumbered myriads of millions of human beings, in its many elements and on its many sides, that History studies, as it has lived and moved through thousands and thousands of years. Now, into this study Theology undoubtedly enters as a prime and chief factor, and its continued right in this relation is beyond dispute or cavil, and is being always more fully recognized by the deeper and more comprehensive historical science of our time. The history of no tribe or people whatever, can ever be fully understood without the history of its religion, and its religion, as a rule, sheds the deepest light upon

its history. It is the very Ariadne thread that guides us most directly and safely through the labyrinth of the past.

And hence the extension of the study of religion or Theology in our day, to the whole race in the new science of the History of Religions, and the comparative study of religions. This department of religious history is now, like political history and the history of civilization, prosecuted scientifically, and is universally acknowledged to be scientific, when prosecuted under a correct positive method that searches continually for fact, ignores no fact, and never leaves fact out of view. The historical method, working with the aid of its handmaids—philology, criticism, archæology, and monumental epigraphy—is thus as truly scientific as is the method of the physical sciences themselves, although it may not yet be so exactly formulated, and may be always more difficult to apply. The historical method is, indeed, a higher and more complex scientific method, as all competent logicians now see, because its element is spiritual, and its facts are more difficult to reach and reproduce and retain. The exteriority of space is here everywhere more or less overcome, and a higher mode of vital cohesion and interaction comes into view. The spiritual element, moreover, brings with it new relations and higher ideas, which their student and interpreter can only apprehend and fathom by the spiritual affinity to them of his own mind. He not

only studies, but assimilates the thoughts and ideas of the mind and life of the past. And here it is, and not in the sphere of nature proper, that the Infinite and the Eternal come consciously into his sphere of study as they have been formerly reflected in human reason, and this is what gives its highest interest and elevation to historical science. Now, our theology takes up this study at its very highest, and here begins at once its permanent right and its exceptional value. It deals not only with the highest spiritual life of the past, with its loftiest aspirations and its highest thoughts, but with what is divinest, what is infinite and eternal, in man. It is thus that the divine and supernatural comes into view through the medium of its own manifestation in time and history. Following its movement through all the past, you have to study this historical presentation of the divine more especially on its highest stage, its culmination in Christianity, in so far as it can be scientifically determined by the Biblical and historical study of Theology in the Divinity Hall. Systematic Theology, indeed, requires us to deal with the whole evolution of religion in its relation to Christianity, as a part of our study of Apologetics. But the more special historical study of the Biblical and Christian faith falls to my learned colleagues who guide your study of the language and religious history of Ancient Israel as presented in the Old Testament, of the language and religious history

of Primitive Christianity as presented in the New Testament, and of the development and progress of Christianity as presented in the history of the Church. All these departments of Theology—Hebrew, Greek, Biblical Criticism, Exegesis, and Church History—taken by themselves, are purely historical studies. Their highest aim, in their particular spheres, is just to elucidate the contents of the Biblical revelation and to reproduce the Christian life and ideas of the past.

3. Many theologians around us would practically confine the function of Christian theology to this historic elaboration of the past, and would have us stop here. But while this purified reproduction of past religious experience is fundamental and essential to all Christian theology as its historical basis and presupposition, it is not sufficient for the demands of theological thought and theological science. It is, indeed, just at this point, and with this gathered material to found upon, that the highest and purest scientific work of Theology properly begins. Up to this point, theological truth is only known as it has been realized in other minds; and in its historical form it is still a thing of the past, and external to the mind apprehending it as such. But it has yet to be divested of its historical contingency and alienness, and realized as true in itself. If it is not to be blindly accepted and held under the external con-

straint of mere authority, it has to be established as absolute truth, and to be possessed by personal insight before it can become sure living knowledge, and be brought into harmony with the other living knowledge of the time. Nor is this to be accomplished by merely dropping the historical surroundings or setting of traditional truth, and presenting it in a general, abstract form, void of all life and movement. Such an abstraction cannot, in our age, satisfy either the spiritual vitality of thought, the concrete demand of science, or the practical guidance of the religious life. In short, the old truth that lived spiritually in the minds of those who first livingly apprehended it, and which has pulsated all through the historical process, has to be caught up again, realized in its essential vitality, and formulated anew in harmony with the new intellectual conditions. This is the highest work of thought in Christian theology; it will be scientific only in so far as it proceeds under truly scientific conditions; and it will be practical in so far as it satisfies the needs of faith, and quickens the energy of the soul to renewed religious activity.

And this is the very task of Systematic Theology as we cultivate it here. It has, first of all, to systematize the historical factors of theology by formally defining, dividing, and co-ordinating them with each other, and so as to make them subservient and contributory to a new synthesis of thought which is the ultimate ideal of

this highest theological effort. And while it is thus limited or conditioned, and, as we may say, nourished by the historical, and so prevented from issuing in mere barren philosophical abstractions, it has yet to cultivate and utilize the positive conditions of Christian truth so as to issue in the formulation of absolute Christian doctrines. Its special and inalienable work among the sciences, is to determine whether God is truly knowable, how far He can be known and thought under the present conditions of knowledge, and how His manifestation and revelation in the past is to be interpreted and applied to the living needs of the religious life. The historical is the transition through which the theologian passes from the agnosticism of mere positive science to the higher intellectual cognition of rational theology. And while that rational theology constitutes the highest philosophy of religion, it is not mere philosophy, which is rather a method of thought than an actual science, and which can vindicate no concrete object for itself that some positive science does not also claim, except it be the formulation of an abstract metaphysic and the working-out of a logical theory of knowledge. But Theology possesses the fundamental condition of all the sciences in having a distinct and concrete object of its own as the specific and distinctive term of its knowledge, and this is the highest, the supreme object, God Himself. Theology as a science claims to gather into itself, as no

other department of science can, and to systematize, on its own special standpoint, all knowledge of God that is attainable by human reason, by tradition, by experience, or by revelation. Neither physical science nor metaphysical philosophy, strictly taken, are in themselves theological; they only become so when they borrow ideas from Theology, or do vicariously the work of Theology. This is shown by the large amount of valid advocacy of empirical physical science that is entirely irreligious, or even anti-religious and anti-theological, and its general tendency at present towards an agnostic standpoint. The more clearly these distinctions are made and recognized, the more clearly the objective knowledge of the world is assigned to physical science, and the more clearly the subjective knowledge of the human mind is assigned to philosophy, the more clearly will the supreme right and function of theology in the organism of science—taking that word in its widest sense—come into view. For mere world-knowledge cannot solve the ultimate problem of existence, as is shown by its always becoming more conscious of its own limitations and surrendering, ever and again, the universality of the ideal, nor can mental philosophy secure a permanent supersensible cognition on a historic basis, that can be turned to general social account, as it is ever more frankly confessing; and Theology alone remains as the means of at once

transcending and harmonizing both in a universal system of knowledge. It is our high privilege to labour here, in these academic surroundings, at that great task. It is specially ours to endeavour to rise in thought with all the wealth of the religious past, and with all the aid that science and philosophy can yet bring, to the highest, the absolute truth, which comprehends all other truth and makes it possible, which in transcending the limits of lower knowledge enables us at once to understand its contradictions and to bind them into unity again; to find new hope for the world when lost in itself and estranged from God; to re-illumine its darkness with the pure rays of His own truth; and to fill it once more with conscious participation in the divine life that beats back from the finite world to Him for ever again.

Be the fuller comprehension and the vindication and prosecution of this high task our chief work this session; and, prosecuted in undying faith in its possibility, at a time when the truth it seeks is needed more than ever, may it be fruitful and blessed work to us all!

But you may ask at the outset, Is this Ideal of Theology capable of realization in our age, or is it not a mere abstraction that must ever flit before us as beyond our grasp and above our powers—at the

best an illusion of the past which may, indeed, have drawn humanity on in its progress hitherto, but which is now fated to dissolve and disappear before the hard, stern, disillusioning realities and limitations of the time? We shall afterwards have to consider this and other negative points of view in detail, but one pathetic reason must be pressing on all our minds even now to rebuke all such questioning, and constrain us strongly, as also most tenderly, to believe in the realization of the Theological Ideal. To-day in this Divinity Hall, sorrowing as we are under the great bereavement that has befallen our University in the death of our late beloved Principal, we may yet soothe our sorrow in his own high Christian faith, while we draw courage again for the prosecution of our task from his great example, and new hope from his splendid work for the science which he cultivated so faithfully and loved so well.

Since he passed away many tributes of appreciative admiration and gratitude have been paid, from various sides, to his conspicuous virtues and achievements. He has been universally recognized as the greatest preacher our country has produced during this century, and as, indeed, pre-eminently the one Chrysostom of the Church in Scotland. He has been acknowledged by all the authorities of the University to have been eminently successful in all the relations of his high office as Principal and Vice-Chancellor. He has been

celebrated for his high philosophic gift and insight, his intellectual grasp, and his exceptional power as an orator and artist in words. And he is mourned for deeply and widely to-day as few have been, as one of the noblest of men in his personal character, as one of the most conscientious and erudite of scholars, and as one of the most genial and generous of companions and friends. But with a deep sense of all his love and doings for his fellow-men, his country, his Church, and his University upon us, we in this Divinity Hall, which he so greatly adorned, and at this hour, when called again to the task which has fallen from his hands, specially think of him above all as the great teacher and theologian who, by his personal inspiration and profound thought, has consecrated the study of theology to all his successors, and to all earnest students, who may enter into his spirit here.

It came almost as a surprise when the first preacher of his day, who had thrilled every audience he addressed, and on whose eloquent words ever-increasing crowds hung with untiring admiration, passed into the quiet retirement of academic work to cultivate its severer methods and its calm, unimpassioned thought. But he carried all his great powers, still fresh and unworn, into the professorial Chair, and the very first words he uttered in the old College brought with them the demonstration of the

same unrivalled mastery in dealing with the fundamental problems of Theology and the deepest mysteries of the spiritual life. He had reached the full possession of all his philosophical, theological, and artistic power when he delivered his first opening lecture in this new Divinity Hall in 1870, and I shall never forget the thrill of admiration and sympathy with which I listened to it, as a student on these benches, among a crowded and deeply moved auditory. Many, like myself, have owed to him the deepest theological impulse of their lives, and have ever regarded him not only with unbroken, but with increasing, admiration the better his work and aims were understood. From first to last he seems to me to have realized the ideal of the modern theologian more completely than any other theologian I have known: for he loved theology as his first and chiefest love in the intellectual sphere, and lived for it above all else, and, in view of his last heroic effort, he may be said, without exaggeration, to have died a martyr to it.

The ardour of an absolute faith in God and the utter necessity of clear, rational knowledge of God possessed and sustained him throughout. He felt that it was the great need of his time, amid a growing uncertainty as to fundamental theological truth, the breaking down of traditional convictions, the rise of new unchristianized and anti-Christian modes of

thought, and the accumulating perplexities and distractions of Protestant theology, to find a deeper and larger standpoint on which the Christian faith could be more essentially understood, and its inward and higher relations more directly grasped than was then done either by the current rationalism or the traditional supernaturalism. When he began his work as Professor of Theology, the external and outworn methods of the eighteenth century were still dominant in all the divinity halls of Scotland, and at best they only tended to bring the traditional theology of the Church into ever harder and more irreconcilable antagonism to the new scientific spirit. The leading theological teachers of the time had neither the insight to see the artificial limitations that had been superinduced upon Protestant theology by its own polemical excesses, nor had they the courage to attempt the liberation of the struggling religious spirit of the time from its alien accidental bondage. But Dr. Caird brought with him from the fervid intuitions of the pulpit the very conditions of a truer method, such as had been for a time more courageously cultivated in the new theological schools of Germany. His early sermon on "Religion in Common Life," the most popular he published, showed that he had already grasped the new conception of the essential nature of religion with no faltering hand, and the still more remarkable sermon

on "The Self-Evidencing Nature of Divine Truth," to which he gave the first place in his volume, proved that he had reached a standpoint on which he could at once conserve all that is essential in Christianity as the religion of redemption, and yet look with open eye and pacified heart on all the great movements of history and all the stern struggle of his time. He could find no absolute certainty in a mere ecclesiastical tradition, however honoured and honourable, nor in the perpetual fluctuations of external historical criticism, and so he turned, with sincere personal acceptance, under the guidance of a more philosophical method than had been known hitherto in our Scottish theology, to the central truths and principles of the Christian revelation itself. He ultimately reached them in sympathy with all other known religious truth, and it was no accident that the new science of the comparative History of Religions found him prepared to receive its latest teaching, to become one of its most devoted students, and to be the first theological teacher in Scotland to give it systematic exposition in our Universities. But his own lofty and aspiring genius carried him through the historic evolution with a higher speculative flight, like the eagle soaring undazzled to the sun, away above the merely subjective and phenomenal in religion towards the essential being of God, His universal self-manifesta-

tion in Nature, and His crowning revelation of Himself in the incarnate Person and Work of Jesus Christ. It could hardly be expected that he would be always fully understood in a community which had not been trained in his forms of thought, and he had in a manner to create a new theological atmosphere and environment for himself and his highest conceptions. He spoke betimes with something like impatience and scorn of the shallower moods and movements of the hour, and turned utterly away from all ecclesiastical clamour and intrigue, and the fond, delusive imagining that the mere assertion of authority or the elaboration of ritualistic form could permanently meet or satisfy the spiritual need of the emancipated mind. He thus ever found himself in conscious affinity and harmony with all that is highest and deepest and purest in Christian thought, not of the day or hour merely, but of all the ages, and he clung to it and cultivated it with rare loyalty and courage to the end. He found, as was inevitable, his spiritual home in the theology of St. John, the apostle of love and completion, and his theological masters in the greatest Christian thinkers who had unfolded Christian truth as the absolute philosophy, verified and confirmed by all the self-certainty of reason—Justin Martyr, the philosopher, Clement and Origen of Alexandria, Athanasius and Augustin, Anselm, Scotus and Aquinas. But while he found the true apostolical suc-

cession not in the mere contingencies of external contact, but in the essential ever-recurring identity of all true Christian faith and thought, he was at the same time entirely modern in his conception of Christian theology, and with true catholicity gave the largest place and scope to its continuous evolution. He clearly grasped the fundamental principle of free Protestant thought, and laboured to harmonize its many divergent tendencies and expressions in a larger philosophy of the Christian revelation and a more comprehensive and spiritual conception of the Christian Church. From the outset of his career he caught more fully than any other theologian in Scotland the large, new insight of the nineteenth century that had redeemed the poetry of nature in Wordsworth, that had given fresh impulse to our great English scientists, and that had found, as he thought, its fullest philosophical expression in Hegel. Hence the breadth, the depth, the height, the poetic richness, and the intense humanity of his theology. He has not left us a complete new elaboration of the theological system, but all he has left is full of lofty and pregnant thought, is characterized throughout by a rare combination of universality and freedom in its method, and is touched everywhere with the subtle grace and charm of the finest art. In all this we have a precious inheritance, which we shall do well to cherish here as one of our dearest and best possessions.

We are told that when the great master of German thought, whom he held in the highest regard, was suddenly snatched away from his powerful work, his sorrowing disciples gathered around his grave, and, amid their tears, vowed to be faithful to his high teaching and example. To-day, as we enter again upon our labour here, we may also well resolve to keep before us in affectionate memory the example of our own great teacher, and his holy enthusiasm for all that is highest and noblest and divinest in truth and in life. While we continue to prosecute our task with that independence which he cultivated so bravely in himself and encouraged so generously in others, we shall best show our appreciation of him and our gratitude for all he has done, by striving to live and work like him, and to keep his ideal fresh and living amongst us, in all the love that he has kindled in our hearts, and with what, above all, we have caught from him at the highest—a renewed hope for humanity and a deepened faith in God.

II.

THEOLOGY AS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

November 1, 1898.

The fundamental question of the scientific character of Theology and its right to a place, and even the highest place, in the circle of the sciences, which we were discussing yesterday, turns mainly upon the definition of Theology. Now, there are two leading definitions of Theology which here come relevantly into view, and which, without anticipating later and more precise discussion, may be founded upon. First, Theology is defined as the Science of Religion; and, secondly, it is defined, in accordance with the etymology of the term, as the Science of God. The former definition is the more modern one, and it is now most generally received as at once giving Theology a definite, universally intelligible and generally recognized, object and sphere of study. Religion is unquestionably a great historical

reality. It has entered deeply into all the life of the past; and no historian can ignore its influence, its working in society, its ceremonies and its institutions, its literary expression and products, as presented in the history of the race. Hence Theology, in so far as it appropriates this special range of historical phenomena for its subject, is as unquestionably scientific as any historical study can be, when it is prosecuted according to a truly historical method. And as, with the growth of the historical spirit in our time, religious history is always being more fully recognized as of commanding importance and perennial interest, it has now taken its place permanently among the Historical Sciences.

1. The vast literature produced in the Nineteenth Century, and especially during the past fifty years in the department of the History of Religions, is the strongest illustration and proof of this position. The History of Religion, indeed, was never prosecuted with keener interest, nor written with such scientific accuracy as in the present day. Since the recognition of the insufficiency of the old fragmentary and uncritical modes of exposition, the historical method has been applied to the study of the origin and development of all the Religions, Faiths, and Cults of the world; and the attempt has been made, ever more carefully, since Hegel began it, to embrace them all into a systematic whole under the unifying

conception of the principle of evolution. The same method has been more and more applied to the study of the origin, contents, and development of Christianity itself, and this has likewise given a new scientific character and complexion to Christian Theology. Hence the predominance of the critical and historical activity in Christian Theology at present, which has been superinduced and determined by the necessity laid upon the Church of the Nineteenth Century, to ascertain the historic reality of Christianity in its primitive form. And it has been doing, and is ever more successfully doing this work by the most careful and persevering study of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis, which is theologically so characteristic of our age.

The new historical material thus elaborated, has been more and more asserting itself as the only solid and reliable basis upon which definite and sound ideas regarding the origin, distinctive character, and historical value of the different religions, and of Christianity as well, can be safely reared. The progress made in this direction during the present century has been enormous, and is incomparably greater in its accurate ascertainment and results than that made in all former ages. And this is entirely and truly scientific work, so that the claim of Theology, both as regards the general History of Religion and the special study of Christianity in our Biblical

Criticism, Biblical Theology, and Church History, to be scientific, and even to take a foremost place among the Historical Sciences, is now beyond question. Much undoubtedly still remains to be done in this sphere in the way of dispelling uncertainty and securing historical facts with greater sureness through continued literary criticism, discovery, and fresh monumental evidence. And it will, no doubt, be increasingly done by the more exact application of scientific method, whereby apparently exceptional and unrelated facts will be more and more brought within the circle and intelligibility of historical law.

One chief gain of this historical study of religion has been the scientific proof of its universality. No tribe however low, and no civilization however high, has failed to give evidence of the working of religion in the minds of men everywhere, especially when united in the social state, through the medium of their sacred language, their religious rites, their forms of worship. The apparent exceptions have been met and explained, and it has been found that there is only seeming uncertainty at the two extremes of culture—the lowest barbarism and the most refined civilization. And the reason obviously is, that the savage often cannot express his dim religious feeling and aspiration from the want of appropriate language or art to do it, while some highly civilized men will not do it because they have become ashamed of

religious emotion, or have stifled its vitality by their intellectual one-sidedness and their artificial modes of life.

The accumulated proof of this universality of religion in history, has again suggested, and even necessitated, a further study of the psychological nature of religion in man, or of its subjective seat and origin in the human mind. What is universal as the race can only be explained by its being innate or essential to the mental constitution of all men, or by its springing from an inherent native element or tendency of the soul. The study of this natural religiousness of man has accordingly given rise, especially in the Nineteenth Century, to the Psychology of Religion, which constitutes at present the chief problem of the Philosophy of Religion. A great deal has been likewise written on this subject since Schleiermacher, the greatest theologian of the Nineteenth Century, brought it into special prominence just about the time when Hegel was laying the basis of the History of Religion; and no system of Theology is now of any fundamental value which is not founded upon a study of the subjective principle of religion, as well as upon its objective history. Great progress in Theology has also been made on this side. With Psychology we step out of mere history into the domain of Philosophy. For Psychology is properly a philosophical science as dealing analytically with the facts of self-consciousness,

in distinction from physical science, which deals mainly with facts in surrounding space, and historical science, which deals mainly with facts in past time. Speaking generally, Psychology has been becoming more and more scientific in our day in its whole work; its former vagueness and mere descriptiveness have given place to the application of a more precise experimental, and even a mathematical, method in the study of its phenomena. The Psychology of Religion—the analysis of religious instinct, emotion, belief and thought—has shared largely in this advance, and it is actually advancing hand in hand with general psychological science under the treatment, not only of theologians, but of the leading psychologists themselves, so that we now understand scientifically the elements and working of the religious nature of man better than was ever done before. Here then, again, Theology, rightly prosecuted, is truly scientific; and the Psychology of Religion has asserted its right to take its place, along with the History of Religion, in the hierarchy of the Modern Sciences.

2. The Psychology and History of Religion practically exhaust the subject of Theology, according to the first definition of it as the Science of Religion. But the second definition of Theology as the Science of God, evidently aims at raising the subject to a higher level, and indicates the specific purpose of Theology to be objective knowledge of the nature of God

Himself. Now, assuming it for the moment to be possible, this is manifestly the culmination of all the work of Theology in all its departments and processes. It was the characteristic and supreme aim of Theology in all the ancient and mediaeval systems. And if it has been timidly renounced by many of the modern, and especially the most recent systems, this has been occasioned by the predominantly subjective modes of thinking in modern times, by new metaphysical doubt as to objective reality in religion, by the prevalence of historical scepticism, and by the uncertain gropings after a new method that would justify objective knowledge of God. In so far as it may be practicable it must include and recognize all the lower subjective and historical modifications and forms of religion, as the human modes of approaching and conceiving of the Divine. This, which is technically designated religious Phenomenology, must evidently involve at least a certain mode or phase of reality to account for the rise and persistence of its forms. For it is now a recognized principle that there must be some reality corresponding to appearance, and that the two must even be in some ratio or proportion to each other. The historical Phenomenology of Religion thus necessarily points to an ontology, and, logically prosecuted, inevitably leads to it in some form or other. And here it is where the highest function of Theology comes in, when it is prosecuted according to a truly

philosophical method; it is just here where it begins to realize its proper end in striving to reach a higher standpoint of thought, and to penetrate into the nature and being of God Himself.

Hence we see that, while the psychological and historical processes of Theology are predominantly subjective, anthropological, and relative, the constructive activity of thought proper in Theology aims to be objective, theognostic, and absolute, and to be valid and demonstrative for all thought. This latter effort, so far as successfully accomplished, would manifestly give us the highest theological truth, and would really constitute Theological Science. It is around this question that all the higher theological thought of our time moves. On the one hand, thinkers who despair of scientifically attaining to such truth concerning God, sink down to agnosticism, and confine their theological interest, at the most, to mere information about the religions of the past and the futile efforts of the human mind to rise through them to a higher transcendent knowledge of God. On the other hand, other theological thinkers, while conceding to the agnostic that natural reason cannot know God, cling tenaciously to supernatural revelation as an external communication by God of knowledge of Himself to man, but leave it shrouded all over in the unscientific form and mystery of faith. Both these extreme antagonistic views I regard as unsatisfactory and insufficient

for the construction of real theological science. If, on the one hand, we renounce objective knowledge of God as impossible on the agnostic standpoint, Theology will inevitably subside into a mere phenomenal or archaeological study of religion, with much in it that may be curious and striking; but, if it find no absolute reality, the interest in it must finally become limited to a few, and it would then cease to move or affect the spiritual life of the great mass of mankind. On the other hand, if Theology only received its ideas of God through faith, and had to view them apart by themselves, without being able to bring them into relation with all other established knowledge of the world and of man—a view which has been maintained again and again, and is being once more asserted with peculiar emphasis at present—it would then stand isolated and alone in its own mere self-assertion, and would have no vital place in the system of scientific knowledge. Hence if Theology, viewed as scientific knowledge of God, is to be realized as a science, it must vindicate the reality of such knowledge, even to unreasoning faith, by showing how it is to be attained in accordance with a rational method, and how, when attained, it is to be harmonized with all other realized knowledge. In doing so, it will not allow itself to be regarded as the opponent or destroyer of faith, but will claim reverently the right to examine and analyze the grounds of faith,

with the aim of truly assigning it its permanent place in the economy of the spiritual life and illuminating and fortifying it by a higher certainty. And in doing so, Theology will be consciously moving in accordance with all the most earnest aspirations of the modern mind in its passion for reality, and in harmony with all its most fruitful scientific activity.

Here we manifestly grasp the higher problem of Theology, and its supreme function. And however difficult, or even impossible, the theological process may seem, the human mind has never been able to obtain satisfaction without its aid, or to rest short of its goal. Hence all the higher religions exhibit this effort in more or less degree, and in forms peculiar to themselves; and they have only flourished and swayed the lives of men when it was sincerely believed that they had attained to ultimate objective truth, and were not merely playing with the subjective forms and feelings of the human mind. It is quite erroneous to regard faith as having ever been entirely blind and irrational even in the lowest religions. Every religious expression in rite, or symbol, or word, has always had a certain theological import and value, so that all true living faith has implicity held a theology in it. Even Buddhism, with its absolute renouncement of knowledge of a personal God, is rather an apparent than a real exception; its distinctive doctrines, such as Karma and Nirvana, are virtually ideas

of the supernatural that are consciously substituted for a rejected set of older theological dogmas. In Christianity the intellectual effort of Theology takes its clearest and highest form. Christianity is at once the most rational and the most scientific religion as bringing the condition of eternal life into immediate relation with the knowledge of the only true God. "This is life eternal that they might *know Thee*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." We see this clearly all through the doctrinal development of the Church, from St. Paul and St. John—in the Greek Apologists, in Origen, the first of the systematic theologians, in the intellectual succession of the Ancient Fathers, and in the Ancient Oecumenical Councils, with their formulated dogmas concerning the Nature and Incarnation of God, down through the great scholastic theologians of the Middle Ages, with their highly elaborated definitions and distinctions, and their comprehensive theological systems. Undoubtedly the Theology of the Protestant Reformation took on a distinctively subjective character from its turning away from the false objectivity of Romanism into the inward depths of faith; but it carried the rational principle in its bosom, and has given it new and higher, and at times, as in the one-sided rationalism of the Eighteenth Century and in the Hegelian Theology in the Nineteenth Century, extreme applications. The critical history of Christian doctrine

in our day has, indeed, been striving to minimize the theological value of the whole dogmatic development of the Church, by assigning its leading factors and products to non-Christian sources. But this is an overstrained view; and even if it made a *tabula rasa* of the ecclesiastical dogmas, it would only make clearer and more urgent the need of new doctrinal definition and reconstruction. From every point of view, one of the chief tasks of Protestant Theology indeed its most pressing task, in our day is just the call to elaborate anew the doctrine of God in its objective truth, and to find in it again the one strong, sure, ultimate support for all our religious activities.

3. This is our own primary task here, and we must take it up in a sincere scientific spirit. Call it the Metaphysics of Theology, or the ultimate Philosophy of Religion, if you will, it is manifest from the outset that we must face this fundamental question firmly if we are to hold our own clearly, distinctively, and surely amid all the other contending modes of thought that are struggling for supremacy in our time. Upon this point we must have no personal doubt or hesitation or uncertainty. An atheistic Theology is a contradiction in terms. Our first, our most certain truth, our primary and universal principle, our Alpha and Omega, *must* be God. A full, comprehensive, scien-

tific, Christian theism is thus what we chiefly want, both for our own personal assurance and in our practical dealing with the religious wants of others. All other theological questions will be found to run up into this supreme doctrine, and to receive their last solution in it. The multifarious unsettled thinking, now prevalent concerning minor theological questions in detail, can only come to rest in a renewed assurance of God, and they will be only of real value in so far as they help, through the course of their discussion, to enrich our Theology with a purer and more vital idea of God. If they do other than this, or less than this, they will only obstruct the progress of Theology, and bring discredit and failure to it as a professed science. All other theological inquiry, all struggle with doubt, all forced abandonment of antiquated positions, should culminate here in the grasp of divine truth with a new and higher certainty. It is only then that, as theologians, we shall have secured a permanent, immovable position; shall have reached that which cannot be shaken or taken away; and shall go forth armed impregnably and irresistibly, in the strength of the deepest, inmost personal conviction, for religious warfare and victory.

Even at the outset it will be manifest that the thought of God, in His infinity and eternity, legiti-

mately reached and realized, must be the grandest and the most comprehensive of all thoughts. God must be thought, if He be thought at all, as the source of all existence, of all life, of all order, of all truth, of all beauty, of all goodness, of all that has been and of all that has yet to be; as the corrector of all disorder and wrong in His universe; as our deliverer from its oppression and the realizer of our salvation in all possible perfection and blessedness; as the Creator and Sustainer of all, the Preserver of all, the Governor and Consummator of all. God must be at once the most real and the most ideal of Beings, embracing all existence from its widest range to its minutest atom, the Power that moves and works in all things, the Giver and Inspirer of all new life and thought, the Sum of all knowledge and the Ideal of all perfection. The thought of God must thus be ever increasing, ever expanding; it must be the ultimate condition of all progress; and it must show itself so full and rich in content as to be to the finite mind inexhaustible. Rightly regarded, this thought must, by its very nature, be the most certain of all thoughts and the condition of all true knowledge; for all finite being must exist in and of God, and every particular idea must be contained in His thought. We shall only know God when we know Him better than we do each other, and when we have come to know ourselves

better than we have hitherto done, through and in Him. Theology will certainly prove itself to be a most real science, and actually the supreme form of knowledge, if it lifts us thus up into the sphere of this universal thought, and makes it actual, rational, and living to us. All other science, all the particular sciences of Nature and of History, rightly construed, will then pass into it, and will be focused and absorbed in it, as the parti-coloured rays of light enter into and are combined in the white radiance of sun and starlight. No knowledge in any of its kinds or forms, is, or can be, alien to Theology as the science of God. For He knows all and is known in all, and, rightly interpreted, all knowledge is knowledge of Him. It is just the function of Theology to theologize knowledge, to give it its last and highest expression in terms of God. And no higher, no grander, no nobler scientific question can there be than this—the searching for the meeting-point to which all the particulars of knowledge converge, and where the finite mind finds itself at home with the Infinite Intelligence. Although so much of the thought of our time is turning away with dimmed and dazzled eyes, not only in our philosophies but in the latest schools of Theology as well, from the splendour of all this sphere of thought, as if it had become "dark by excessive bright," and were for the time blinded to the supernal, yet, our Theology,

still pursuing the highest truth, will not, in view of it all, surrender its ideal,

> "nor bate a jot
> Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
> Right onward."

They tell us nothing new who emphasize the difficulties of the fundamental problem of Theology, or who point despairingly to the many failures of the past. Those who have studied and thought over the problem most deeply, know these things the best. We know, for example, that we have to grapple, on the very threshold, with the critical agnosticism of Kant on the one hand, and with the dialectical absolutism of Hegel on the other; but we also know that both of them are ancient in principle, and that they are become already vanishing modes of thought. We know but too well that the long conflict between religion and science has wearied out much of their forces, and has brought them to look upon each other with habitual distrust and suspicion, as has often been the case before; yet the life of both is ever fresh and new. Nay, we can even see that the very portal of the Temple of Divine Truth has been again more firmly barred to baffled reason by the theologians themselves, in a moment of transient victory over her revolt; and we can hear even now all the practical forces and interests of the Church loudly summoned again to do battle for a mere

spectral faith. Yet withal we advance under no other discouragements than just those that have long been known, and that have been victoriously overcome once and again. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common" There is really nothing essentially new in the present trial of our faith, or in the obstacles besetting our Theology, although they may be often designated by new-fangled names, such as Agnosticism, Phenomenology, Antinomies of Reason, Epistemology, and the like. We have learned, as the very first lesson of history, not to expect finality at any stage of a temporal process, and least of all in the process of knowledge. Theology is really in no worse condition in this respect to-day than Science and History were yesterday in the movement of thought. *Their* processes, too, are still all boldly called in question, and they are held and applied at the best with but feeble grasp as yet. Theology is, indeed, a day behind, lingering still on the confines of the mediaeval twilight, and timidly hesitating to open her dream-bound eyelids in the fuller light of the new dawn. But all nature is calling her, with wondrous voices ringing in the melodies of the morn, to the fuller and larger and clearer vision of the world and of man in God. So, too, all true science and all true history are coming to her again, tendering most faithful service as her strong, willing handmaids, and asking only for the joy of

freedom and the one restraint of love in doing their work.

If Theology be thus called again under new conditions, to realize the thought of God, it is only too evident that this highest effort must demand and call into action all her resources. It will require the most careful scrutiny of the inner working and capacity of the rational mind; it will demand a survey of the whole working and achievement of realized science; it will need all the light of history to guide it both by way of warning and encouragement; it will call for energy of thought, self-denial, and perseverance at every turn. We would fain have our task made easier, would gladly shrink from its pain and toil and struggle, would willingly ask others to think it all out for us, and resign ourselves passively to their teaching and mastery. And many great souls have, indeed, nobly and unreservedly given all the energy of their splendid intellects, the whole endeavour of their lives, their highest aspirations, to this task; and they are veritably our teachers and masters, whom we cannot follow too reverently or too gratefully. Yesterday we saw this in a very affecting personal relation, when

> "brooding on the dear one dead,
> And all he said of things divine."

But even our greatest masters cannot do more for us than show us their own great thoughts; they cannot,

at the best, give us a dispensation from at least thinking them again for ourselves. It is at once the solemn duty and the high prerogative of every mind that has realized its essential responsibility and freedom, to feel and know that its relation to God is a *personal* one in the inwardness of its own thought, and that until it attains to the consciousness of personal communion with Him, however it be mediated, it is still a stranger to the divine and the eternal. Let us not then fail here, but like Him we follow, who "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," let us be ever pressing on, it may be at times through storm and gloom, in the strength of purest and holiest resolution towards the heavenly light—up the shining steeps that will bring us to the very presence of God. Be our motto ever onward and upward, "Excelsior!"

How all this is to be scientifically achieved can only be shown as we proceed in our attempt to do it. But evidently the cardinal guidance must be found in the view-point of our method. It was the neglect of this question, or superficial dealing with it, that brought about the fall of the old Natural Theology in the end of the Eighteenth Century. It had sunk no deep foundation for the support of its structure; it overweighted itself with an accumulated burden of loose unsifted material; and its pretentious self-assertion provoked the drastic philo-

sophical criticism, under which it collapsed, and which it could neither repel nor understand. And, practically, it deserved to fall; for it never advanced beyond the form of abstract reasoning about the existence of God, which neither penetrated into the heart of religion nor brought any satisfaction or power to human life. In divorcing itself from the concrete reality and interest of historical religion, it lost all hold of the social movement, and became, as it has been called, the mere play-thing of solitary thinkers. But to us the thought of God must be, in fact, the most concrete and vital essence of knowledge: nothing in nature or in man can be alien to it; it must grasp all cognition, and life, and reality in their ultimate radicle, their last condition. Hence we see again, that we have to carry with us, in our effort, all the realized science we know, and all the auxiliary departments of Theology. Thus conceived, Theology does not proceed on a single monotonous line, nor confine itself to mere abstract discussion. The great book of human knowledge, now a vast Encyclopaedia, written full on every page, lies open before it, and it must diligently turn over its many leaves and search through them for ascertained facts and revelant illustration. For every fact within the range of knowledge, as we have seen, is most relevant here.

Theology, in consequence of its own internal

development, has also itself become encyclopaedic. It is now rather a complex of various departments of science than a single science. So varied and manifold have its branches become, and so different are its materials and its methods, that the study of them has itself become a new department of Theological Science under the name of Theological Encyclopaedia. We make this a subject of study in the Junior Class, and I need only refer to it generally in the present connection. We know how scientific Theology has become differentiated and organized into the different departments of the Philosophy of Religion, including its Psychology and History, as the preliminary study of general Theology; and how it is logically followed by the special study of Christian Theology, subdivided into its four recognized departments of Exegetical or Scriptural Theology; Historical Theology, including, with the History of the Church, the History of Christian Doctrine, Literature, and Art; Systematic Theology, including Christian Apologetics, Dogmatics, and Ethics; and Practical Theology, including Liturgics, Homiletics, Pastoral Theology, and the Government and Extension of the Church. All these departments of Theology contain elements or aspects of the thought of God; and, faithfully prosecuted, the highest divine reality and truth will be found in special manifestation in each of them. But, cultivated separately, however great their individual worth

and interest, they still lack unity of conception and the highest unification of subject. If theological truth is one and its constituent parts are essentially connected, Theology itself must grasp and unfold the constitutive and pervasive unity upon which all its elements and order depend.

And hence it becomes necessary, from the standpoint of Theological Science itself, to find the unity of a point of view under which its various departments can be embraced, and co-ordinated into a single harmonious whole. One of the many fertile and valuable thoughts of Schleiermacher, was to bring the different departments of Theology into unity by viewing them in their common relation as subsidiary to the Service and Government of the Church. This view is relevant and useful in dealing with Theology in relation to the practical ends of the Church organization, and it is specially applicable in a Theology which aims at promoting the special purposes of any particular Church on its own standpoint. But, strictly taken, it is neither truly scientific nor properly academic, the two points of view from which we should deal with Theology here. We seek, therefore, a more constitutive and essential point of view, a more organic and embracing unity, and we find it clearly in the conception of Theology, now given, as the scientific knowledge of God. All the departments of Theology, however apparently heterogeneous, will

combine of themselves into an organic unity, in so far as they are each contributory, in their own measure and degree, to promoting and realizing such knowledge. And, strictly speaking, they are only properly theological in the degree in which they consciously aim at and do this, and are thus at once cultivated in the consciousness of God, and with the view of purifying and increasing that consciousness. Each of them may be said to hold implicitly in itself the highest knowledge of God; but they are of value to the theologian, not as ends in themselves, but only in so far as they develop, enrich, and substantiate his theological conception. This gives them all a common purpose, a common task, a common spirit. But it is in thinking them constructively, by a method which harmonizes and elevates all their results in a higher unity, that Systematic Theology rightly claims the crown of knowledge, and that Theology in this highest and fairest form may still stand forth prominently, as in days of yore, supreme in the realm of knowledge, as the purest offspring of the Divine Intelligence, and as still the very Queen of the Sciences.

I have said that our study of Theology here should be academic as well as scientific. Now-a-days, the question is often discussed as to whether Theology is entitled to a place in the academic curriculum;

and it is not unfrequently maintained that it should now be removed from the circle of the university sciences, and cultivated, if at all, in special theological colleges under the exclusive authority of, and in subordination to, the particular ends of the several Churches. Without entering at present upon the position of these extra-mural Theological Colleges, or examining the arguments by which their position is advocated, or questioning in the least their usefulness and efficiency in their own sphere, we may still maintain that Theology, when treated as a science, is entirely in place within the University; that it ought, if anywhere, to flourish healthily in the free air of our modern academic life; and that the scientific system of university education would be manifestly incomplete and imperfect without it.

If we still find, and most properly find, a fundamental place in the university curriculum for the language, literature, and mythology of ancient Greece and Rome, and for the study of general history and the progress of civilization, much more surely should the language, literature, and history of Christianity, and its dominating influence in the formation, development, and character of modern history, civilization and thought, be in place too. If Modern Science in all its manifold forms, be deservedly the subject of keen and eager study in the University, we surely should not leave it without also giving our deepest

thought to the more fundamental questions of the ultimate origin of the physical world and its final purpose, the meaning of its established order and laws, and the mystery of the Providence which ever guides and rules it. If Philosophy still illumines our Universities with the light that pure reason can cast upon man's nature, conduct, and destiny, much more should Theology surely be welcomed, when it brings a higher light from Heaven to shed its radiance over the deeper mysteries of life, just where the light of individual reason confessedly goes out in darkness. If Medical Science is rightly assigned so large and prominent a place for its beneficent work of examining the wonderful structure and functions of the body, and determining the conditions of a healthful existence, much more should Theology be recognized in its study of the spiritual nature of man, and in its investigation of the conditions of health of soul and eternal well-being. If the study of our civic and public law, and the regulated conditions of the social order, justly hold an honourable place in our Corporation, much more should that study of Law do so which finds "its seat in the bosom of God, its voice in the harmony of the world," and which recognizes Him at once as the only perfect Lawgiver and the absolutely just Judge, whose energy pervades, and directs, and controls the whole social life of men. Carefully examined, none of these departments of Science is

complete in itself, nor can any one of them reach its own ultimate, until it is finally merged, or embraced, in Theology. Without the knowledge of God, all the truth and utility they furnish, is still finite, limited, unsatisfying. But, carried up into God, they assume a new and higher meaning; they become transfigured in the divine light; and each and all minister of their own to eternal truth, beyond and above which reason can conceive of nothing, in the complete satisfaction of its own oneness with God and immortality. Theology is thus the keystone in the universal arch of knowledge, which binds all its parts into unity, and brings the things seen and temporal, on the one side, into harmonious connection with the things unseen and eternal, on the other. A University that does not embrace this highest unifying knowledge within the range of its studies, is really not entitled to the venerable designation of a *Universitas Doctorum et Literarum*, or to be regarded as a University, in the proper sense, at all.

All this applies most clearly and certainly to the special department of Theology which we are about to take up and prosecute, namely, Natural or Rational Theology; the basis of which must be found in human nature, the range of which must embrace all our knowledge of the world, the method of which must be scientific if it is to be successfully prosecuted, and the end of which must be universal truth, as being truth

about God. We should freely bring to it all the power and resource acquired by previous academic study of the classical world, of the world of nature, and of philosophic thought; and we ought to prosecute it in the free academic spirit that becomes this place, unfettered by fear, unwarped by prejudice, and animated only by brave unhesitating devotion to the highest truth. We shall have forthwith to look down into the black depths of atheism, and we shall have thereafter to scrutinize the false substitutes which imperfect reason has put in the place of God; but along and through all the "dim and perilous way" we shall surely reach Him at last, if our devotion be only complete, our hearts pure, and our aim holy. Toilsome and slow the onward and upward march from day to day at times may seem. It may appear as if we were lost, through all its first stage, in the barren trackless desert with the parching relentless sun beating ever more fiercely upon the wearied brain, till, like the faithless, fainting prophet, we may be ready to cry: "Better to die than to live!" But assuredly every step of the way will give new strength and security, if it be only sustained by patience and perseverance, and the hallowed resolution of the great poet and scholar, "to scorn delights and live laborious days." Thus and thus only, but thus surely, and not by harsh external assertion of mere authority nor unreasoning denunciation of inevitable error, not by airy flights of fancy in

mere beating of the air, nor by material considerations of personal ambition, or interest, or ease, but only by the free and full work of reason through all its range, shall we attain towards the last and highest end of Theology—the vision and the fruition of God.

"We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, and more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upwards in the night.

"Standing on what too long we bore
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
A path to higher destinies.

"Nor deem the irrevocable Past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last,
To something nobler we attain."

III.

THE PRESENT POSITION AND PROSPECTS OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH.

Inaugural Lecture, October 29, 1895.

Mr. Principal:—The kind and generous words with which you have been pleased to introduce me to my students, impress me with a yet deeper sense of responsibility in entering upon the duties of my office in the University. And to you, Gentlemen, Students of Divinity, I confess that I never felt more deeply the significance and importance of the special work entrusted to me here than I do at this moment, when I meet you for the first time and address to you my first words.

The duty of a Professor of Divinity has never been an easy one, and in our time it has come to be burdened with difficulties and responsibilities in an ever-increasing degree. In presence of the theological distraction and division around us, and of the growing

uncertainty and indefiniteness of theological thinking generally, the function of determining valid theological doctrines, of expounding and defending them, and unifying them into a system—which is the formal scientific task assigned to the Chair of Divinity, has come to be at once more urgently needed and ever more difficult of execution. In these circumstances, you will naturally expect to hear from me at the very outset, some indication of the standpoint of my thelogical convictions, and of the spirit in which I enter with you upon this task. It is an established custom in our Scottish Universities that the Professor who enters on the duties of a Chair, should devote the first hour of meeting with his students to giving some introductory indication of his attitude towards his subject, as a sort of public profession of his own faith, and as a means mayhap of quickening from the first the sympathy of his students for his own line of thought. If such an exposition cannot but always be felt to be somewhat of an ordeal, it is one which I have no wish to avoid, from any indefiniteness of conviction or any desire to conceal my inmost sentiments. Rather do I welcome and embrace it as a convenient opportunity for giving some clear, frank expression to the basis of my confidence, and to my hopes and aims.

As it seems to me, there should be no dubiety in the mind of any one who has earnestly considered it,

as to what the standpoint of a teacher of Theology from this Chair is, or ought to be. When amid the changes of the years another teacher is called to take up the work of the great succession of theologians who have adorned it for more than two centuries and a half, if he think of himself at all, it can only be to regard himself as a new living "link among the days to knit the generations," and he will naturally consider whether he can conscientiously so relate himself to his subject as to maintain the historic continuity of the faith and thought bound up, under definite guarantees, with his Chair. It owed its existence to the need of more definite theological teaching in the pious city of St. Kentigern, the Scottish capital of the West, at the time of the so-called Second Reformation, when the Scottish Reformed Church was passing through the greatest historical crisis which it has had to encounter since the Reformation of 1560. The momentous General Assembly of 1638, held in the old Cathedral of Glasgow, under the resolute and masterful moderatorship of Alexander Henderson, gathered into it all that was truest and strongest in the characteristic life and faith of the Reformed Church of Scotland of the time, and reorganized anew the polity and practice of the Church. And out of the strong and unwavering faith of that stirring and troubled time, came with many other most significant and far-reaching results, the foundation of this Chair of Divinity in the old

University; and it has had a continuous history and a consistent theological character from the first Professor Dickson who inaugurated its work in 1648, as Robert Baillie tells us, with gifts "for this most needful work *singular*," to the eminent and honoured second Professor Dickson, who brought to that work, twenty-two years ago, gifts of the very same kind, but even more singular in their extraordinary thoroughness and range of learning, and who has now laid down, amid universal admiration and affection, the heavy task which he has discharged with such characteristic conscientiousness and faithfulness. No one can look upon my learned predecessor with higher regard and appreciation than I do, and I greatly rejoice that he is spared, with all his vast erudition and wise thought, to guide and instruct us still.

Our Divinity Chair has been devoted all along to the cultivation and exposition of the Theology of the Reformed Church, under the guidance, from 1640 to 1647, of the original Scottish Confession of 1560, and since then till now of the Westminster Confession as containing, according to the ratifying Act of 1690, "The sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches." It is "the sum and substance" of that doctrine, therefore, which still forms the historical presupposition and basis of the teaching of Theology from this Chair; and I come here, through the favour of the University Court, not to indulge in

mere novel arbitrary speculation, or to attempt to introduce an entirely new order or mode of thinking into the academic or ecclesiastical relations of our work, but to cultivate faithfully with you, on the lines of my illustrious predecessors, that same Theology in all the ample freedom allowed to us, and by means of the new knowledge and consequent insight now available in the manifold new scientific resources of our time.

I have thus attempted to put before you, in the plainest and simplest way, what I conceive to be the proper standpoint of all our work here; and as introductory to our dealing with its details, in the technical and methodized forms of which the present century has been so fruitful, I shall confine myself to-day to a general glance at *the present Position and Prospects of the Theology of the Reformed Church*, as we still find it among the living forces and tendencies of the time. I shall endeavour to speak of it in the hour assigned to me, from the most general point of view, as a system common to all the Reformed Churches, rather than under mere local references, so as to determine in some measure what is its present position and tendency as a whole, in its historical differentiation and contrast to the other theological systems or forms of Theology along with, and among which, it arose.

By the Reformed Church is, of course, meant that

widely distributed branch of Protestantism, distinct from the Lutheran Church, which originated in the Reformation that was inaugurated, independently of Luther's work, in Switzerland by Zwingli and carried on by Calvin and other reformers there; which also took shape in France, in certain parts of Germany, in Hungary, in Holland, and in England; and which is of supreme importance to ourselves as including, through the Reformation of John Knox, our own Scottish Reformed Church and its great and ever-growing offshoots in America, in our Colonies, and elsewhere. The Theology of the Reformed Church, as developed in its various branches, presents a distinct and well-defined type of doctrine, characterized by certain common fundamental principles, and clearly distinguished in all its modifications and forms from the special doctrines of the Roman, the Lutheran, and other Churches. As a system of doctrine, it has been authoritatively exhibited in more than thirty public Creeds or Confessions, and it has been expounded in a vast theological literature, produced by its leading theologians during more than three centuries and a half. It is commonly known under the designation of Calvinism, from the greatest scientific exposition of it in the Age of the Reformation, although this name is too individual to indicate its universal historical character, and is quite inadequate to embrace the manifoldness and variety of its development. We

speak of it rather as the Theology of the Reformed Church as such—a Church which, unlike the Lutheran Church, has refused to be designated by any human name, however honoured, or to be confined within any one national designation or boundary, and which claims to be more truly Catholic than the Roman Church, because it is none other than the Reformed Church of Christ itself, now purged as such of its human corruptions and individual limitation, and elevated into the truly Catholic Universality of the Invisible Church, with immediate Divine Communion in all its members.

At the outset, be it briefly said, that no student of the history of Theology, however catholic his sympathies, however complete his philosophic culture, or however large his intellectual aspirations, need be ashamed to own his allegiance to the Theology of the Reformed Church, to live in the spirit of its faith, or to work in its service. It was undoubtedly the profoundest theological expression of the new religious life of humanity that was quickened and unfolded into being by the great creative impulse of the modern world, the Reformation. For two centuries and more, it moved in the van of all new theological thought. It led the way in Biblical criticism and exegesis; it introduced distincter ethical reflection into Theology; and it systematized the theological thinking of Protestant Europe on the lines of modern science. It has not only embodied the deepest

modern thought about God and divine things, but has conditioned the profoundest philosophy in metaphysics and ethics. It is only in this century that it can be fairly said to have been in any measure eclipsed, or in any way outstripped, by the Lutheran Theology in its recent brilliant development in the German Universities. But, when accurately examined, the best elements in the new Lutheran Theology are found to have been really of Reformed origin. It is now generally admitted that it was to the influence of Schleiermacher that the revival of the German Theology in the nineteenth century mainly owed the new vital impulse that has worked most creatively in it, and that what was best and most creative in Schleiermacher was largely, if not wholly, derived from the theological influence of the Reformed Church, in which he was reared. Even the magnificent conception of Theology unfolded with such marvellous dialectical strength by Hegel, and carried out in the speculative Theology of his school, was at the highest a formal, philosophical reflection of the Reformed conception, but with much less definite Christian contents, and it was, as such, really alien in its best endeavour to the narrow basis and the anti-rational character of the old Lutheran system.

Taken as a whole, the issue of the German development at the close of the century is, in

many respects, disappointing. The canker of mere destructive criticism has gradually eaten out its higher vital faith. From sheer terror of the growing strength of scientific thought, the Speculative Method has been now almost entirely abandoned in Germany on account of the unregulated excesses and the negative positions to which it led. And although Confessional Lutheranism still flourishes and is expounded with great learning and earnestness, its form is largely alienated from the new intellectual and social tendencies of the time.

The most living theological school in Germany at the present hour is that of Ritschl, which now dominates almost all the German Universities. And notwithstanding the indignant repudiation of Confessional theologians like Luthardt and Frank, it is undoubtedly the logical outcome of the original Lutheran Theology, which it claims genuinely to represent and to modernize. But while acknowledging the great good that is being done in detail by the Ritschlian school in the department of Biblical, and especially of New Testament Theology, and while grateful for its influence in lifting up again the historical Christ before the eyes of bewildered and indifferent Germany, and quickening anew the sense of the supreme value of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the Ritschlian system—if system it can be called—can never take with us the place

of the old Reformed Theology, nor satisfy our present need. In almost every respect, except in its appreciation of the historical revelation through Jesus Christ, it presents the greatest contrast to the Reformed system and has no sympathy with it. Its professed object is to separate Theology entirely from philosophy and science, and to confine it within a special sphere of its own, of the narrowest and most exclusive kind. It founds upon the same antagonism to reason that led Luther to flout and jeer at it, as "the beast," and "Mrs. Reason (*Frau Vernunft*), the old storm-raiser," although it gives a certain philosophic dignity to its position by basing it upon Kant's epistemology and theoretical agnosticism. Ritschlianism is admittedly the product of a reaction from the Speculative Theology that preceded it; and carrying that reaction to an extreme, it exhibits, on the whole, a falling back on the old Socinian standpoint. Like the Socinians, the Ritschlians deny the natural religious capacity of man; they repudiate all Natural Theology; they take the same dualistic and mechanical view of the Universe and of the process of Revelation; and they spend their strength mainly in acute criticism and historical dissolution of the whole dogmatic process of the past. The Ritschlian Theology practically plunges the Pagan world in utter darkness. It knows no source of religious truth, but external historical revelation

through the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. It reduces the Person of Christ to mere Socinian dimensions, stripping Him of His pre-existence, His resurrection, and His ascension, and summing Him up, in one word, as the Revealer of God's love, and the Founder of the Kingdom of God. But the love of God is apprehended in so one-sided a way that the cardinal doctrine of the Atonement loses its deeper and wider significance by sin being regarded as all committed in ignorance, and as being, on that utterly untenable ground, immediately forgiven as soon as it is brought into conscious relation to the universal love of God. With an almost ludicrously overdriven hatred of metaphysics and philosophy, which the Ritschlians extrude by a sort of personal violence from the domain of Theology, they occupy a glaringly dualistic position towards the whole domain of science, and resolve religion generally into a form of mere subjective utilitarianism, or even, at the hands of Bender—the Feuerbach of the school—into utter hedonism. While they condemn all the old methods of establishing the truth of the Christian revelation, and even all the doctrinal forms in which the Church has attempted to express its contents, they have deliberately cut themselves off from every logical process through which that revelation can be mediated with reason, and consequently they can only assert their theological propositions on the basis

of individual impressions and practical valuation. Professing to find a new renovative principle in Luther's subjective faith, the Ritschlians shut themselves up with it in the narrowest circle. They see in the world of nature, with all its marvellous order and harmony, not a form of the self-manifestation of God's eternal power and Godhead to the universal reason of man, adapted to awaken and develop the germ of the religious life, but a hard system of terrible mechanical forces, from whose relentless antagonism and resistance it is the moral function of religion to provide a refuge and escape. Their conception of the Divine Presence, and of the Evangelical Preparation, in the magnificent march of human history, is hesitating and uncertain, so that they seldom find a progressive movement or advancing dispensation in the universal order of Providence before the one bright solitary star arose and shone over the Roman Judea. In the long, earnest work of Christian thought for so many centuries, even their best historians find no pure reproduction or development of the original Christian revelation, but rather its sudden obscuration under Pagan skies, the invasion and conquest of the Christian faith by the Greek philosophy, and especially by the Logos dreams of Heraclitus and Plato, and ever falser dogmatized expression of the fundamental truth of Christianity, until at the end in our day the whole

dogmatic product has to be cast aside as useless or misleading, and the theological effort has to be begun again entirely anew.

With all that is being so ably said for it, such a system has neither the depth, nor height, nor breadth, required to satisfy Universal Science, and even the living mind and heart. It certainly falls far short of the Biblical presentation of God and the relations of the religious life; and with all the enthusiasm and devotion of its followers, and the good work many of them are doing in Biblical and Historical Theology, it has neither the strength nor stability needed to withstand the mighty currents of the scientific and social forces that are set against it. This new Lutheranism cannot, any more than the old, ever take the place of the Reformed Theology, and the last issue of the German Theology of the nineteenth century seems to me only to accentuate more emphatically the pressing need of a revival and renewed cultivation of the distinctive Theology of the Reformed Church.

And the nineteenth century *has* seen such a revival and renewed cultivation of that Theology, more or less, in all the branches of the Reformed Church, and with a tendency as pronouncedly towards expansion and development as the present counter-tendency in the Lutheran Theology is towards contrac-

tion and limitation. It has been especially prominent in the continental branches of the Reformed Church, where it has been led, after the vitalizing influence of the master mind of Schleiermacher, by really great theologians, whose names and work are not so well known and appreciated among us as they deserve to be. The work of such men as Schweizer and Schneckenburger in Switzerland, Heppe and Ebrard in Germany, Scholten and others in Holland, is of enduring value, and it is being carried on by living successors, such as Kuyper and Bavinck in Holland, in a more pronouncedly orthodox form. But the Reformed Theology, notwithstanding the Union of the German Church in 1817, has been practically driven out of the German Universities. The old dislike of it, expressed with such violent hatred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has been revived in many forms; and nothing has been more fatal to the vital progress of the Lutheran Theology, on the doctrinal side, than the lack of its intense, stimulating, earnest spirit. In America the century has shown remarkable activity in the cultivation of the Reformed Theology, and has produced expounders of the system, less original indeed than the continental leaders, yet not unworthy of being regarded as lineal successors of Jonathan Edwards. In our own country, while the system has not received any complete new exposition, during this century, of first-rate value, it has yet been

fruitfully cultivated in detail, and notwithstanding all that is being said, it is still the vital and sustaining power in the religious faith and consciousness of our Protestant Churches. Remarkable testimony to the renewed and quickened interest in the Reformed Theology has been given, not only by literary discussion of details of the subject by our most eminent theologians, but by the attempt to formulate a "consensus" of the doctrines of the Reformed Church by the great Alliance of the Presbyterian Churches; and although this has failed practically in the meantime, yet it has quickened throughout these churches the consciousness of the special doctrinal type and character of the Reformed Theology, and has prepared the way for further movement in that direction.

The special position and significance of the Theology of the Reformed Church have been elucidated in a more remarkable manner during the present century, by the application to it of the Comparative Historical Method in the department of Theology called Symbolics, or the comparative study of the various Confessions or organized forms of the Christian faith. These discussions were carried on about the middle of the century on the continent by Baur, Schweizer, Schneckenburger and others, all eminently competent, from their several points of view, to deal with the subject. The chief result as regards the Reformed Church

seems to me to amount to this, that these discussions, with the works that have followed them, have not only removed many misapprehensions and misrepresentations regarding it, but have accentuated with greater emphasis the justification of its historical opposition to the Church of Rome and the necessity of its whole movement of reform; and as regards the Theology of the Reformed Church more particularly, they have all gone to show its incomparable superiority as a system, have given new proofs of its unexhausted vitality and capability of development, and have shown more clearly than ever the thoroughly scientific nature and universality of its method. And in all this they appear to me to have done nothing less than establish its character and claim to be regarded as pre-eminently the Scientific Theology of the modern world.

This position, which is of the first importance to us here, can only be established to complete satisfaction by a much larger and fuller discussion than can be attempted in a few words now, and that discussion will await us as an essential part of our work. But as I am most desirous to dispel any prejudice with which even the youngest of you may be inclined to approach the Reformed Theology, and to gain your confidence from the beginning in its catholicity and vitality, rather than indulge in

mere general description, I shall attempt to indicate its value and significance from one or two leading points of view, relevant to our contemporary Theology, and clearly illustrative of its type of doctrine. All its fundamental principles have been made the subject of new fruitful discussion during this century, such as its Protestant principle and its Scriptural or formal principle; and in view of living ecclesiastical tendencies and of the peculiar position of contemporary Biblical criticism, it would be very interesting to look at the system from these points of view. But they belong rather to the work of my learned colleagues, and while these principles are presupposed everywhere in the system, we have rather to consider its general form and substance as a body of doctrine or theological truth. By confining ourselves to a glance at its *subjective* side and its *objective* side—its most general aspects—or under reference to what may be called its *anthropological principle* and its *theological principle proper*, you may, from a first preliminary glimpse of it, see even now that we are not about to deal with an antiquated, or effete, or narrow system, but with what is at once most modern, most vital, and most progressive in the whole domain of Theology.

1. The distinctive and differential characteristic of the subjective or anthropological principle of the Reformed

Theology has been its maintaining the naturalness or innateness of religion as a primary, universal, and indestructible element in human nature. This statement may at first seem paradoxical in the face of the views commonly entertained. It seems to be very generally supposed that this principle was first introduced into modern Theology by Schleiermacher, in his celebrated *Discourses on Religion*, published anonymously in 1799, and afterwards elaborated by him with more psychological precision in his great doctrinal work on the *Christian Faith*, published in 1821. And undoubtedly Schleiermacher thus started the manifold recognition and psychological discussions of the subjective nature of religion, which have been a characteristic element in all the Scientific Theology of the nineteenth century. But in this he had been long anticipated by the Reformed Theology, and indeed he may be said to have derived this and many other valuable elements in his system from it. From the very outset the Reformed Theology not only gave consideration to the essential nature of religion in itself, but determined its innateness and potentiality as an original and inseparable element of human nature with the most remarkable definiteness, and deliberately made it the basis of the whole theological system. This was done in distinct opposition to the antagonistic view of the contingency and externality of religion held and advocated in the Age

of the Reformation by the Romanists, the Socinians, and the Lutherans, and so as to make it a cardinal principle of the Reformed Theology in contrast to them. The Romanists held that the primary religious endowment of human nature was not essential to its constitution, but was a *donum superadditum* or *donum supernaturale*, which was lost by the Fall. The Socinians practically held that man was not endowed by nature with any inherent religious capacity at all, and accordingly that his constitution in his natural state is virtually a non-religious one fitted merely for a life of moral dominion, lit up by the exercise of intelligent reason, which, however, could not of itself attain to any true knowledge of God. Luther, while holding the primary endowment of an original righteousness, yet maintained that it had been so completely corrupted by the Fall that man in his natural state of sin could attain to no true knowledge of God, but had rather fallen to such a degree as to be, in matters of religion, as it were, "a stock or a stone, or a lifeless statue" (*Com. in Genes.* 19). The Romanists, Socinians, and Lutherans thus agreed, from their different points of view, in denying that any natural religious knowledge was possible to man, and in making him entirely dependent upon external supernatural revelation for all his knowledge of God and divine things. In direct contrast to this position, the great Reformed theologians laid down the

principle that while the natural knowledge of God had become obscured by sin, it had not been entirely lost, that every human soul was endowed by nature with a religious faculty, propension, germ, or felt need implanted by God Himself, by which it was continually kept in a certain religious relationship with Him, and made capable of receiving and appropriating His higher revelation of Himself. Zwingli and Calvin are particularly explicit on this cardinal point. Thus, in often-quoted passages, Calvin says that there is a natural sense of God (*Dei sensus*), and a "seed of religion" (*semen religionis*), implanted in all men, and that it is indelible ("Quendam inesse humanae menti et quidem naturali instinctu divinationis sensum extra controversiam ponimus. Hic divinitatis sensus nunquam deleri potest"). So Peter Martyr describes it as "Dei cognitio omnium animis naturaliter innata," and endless quotations to the same effect might be easily given from all the great Reformed theologians concerning this innate Natural Religion (*Religio naturalis innata*). They especially asserted this great principle in their powerful and earnest polemic against the Socinians, whose bold, arid, external, and unspiritual creed was repudiated by Calvin from the outset, and which is at the very opposite pole of all Zwingli's profound theistic speculation and his whole view of the world, in which the divine immanence is rationally exhibited in a universal vital form that

verges closely on Pantheism. The Socinians, with whose resultant attitude on this point the Romanists and Lutherans were practically at one, regarded the human mind in the religious relation as a mere *tabula rasa*, and took the psychological standpoint of the Nominalists and Scotists of the Middle Ages, as also held by the Ancient Greek Sophists and the Empiricists and Positivists of modern times. On the other hand, the theologians of the Reformed Church, through the clearer consciousness of the idea of their own spiritual life as *renewed* in Christ Jesus, held generally the psychological position of Plato and Anselm, and many of them afterwards found themselves in complete sympathy with Des Cartes, who perhaps learned more from them during his seclusion in Holland than they did from him. The Reformed theologians were thus the modern founders of Natural Theology on its true psychological basis, and their system is profoundly theistic throughout, in the most comprehensive and also in the most rational sense of the term. Notwithstanding a certain popular misconception to the contrary, which has been fostered by the polemical Lutheran theologians, the Reformed Theology, while rational in the highest sense, has no affinity properly with Socinianism, but is as fundamentally anti-Socinian as it is anti-Roman; and in view of its victorious polemic against the old Socinianism, no theologian of the Reformed Church

who understands truly the basis, genius, and outlook of the Theology he has inherited, will ever be tempted to fall back on the Socinian standpoint, which, as we have seen, has been the case with the latest Lutheranism in the Ritschlian School.

Nor did the Reformed theologians leave the principle of Natural Theology in the shape of a mere general assertion; they developed it, through its essential relations to the manifestation of God in the world, into a system of Acquired Natural Religion (*Religio acquisita naturalis*), so that, as Calvin says, "Non solum mentibus indidit Deus religionis semen, sed se patefecit in toto mundi opificio; ut aperire oculos nequeant quin aspicere eum cogantur"—a profound sentence which at once meets the whole position of Physical Agnosticism, and says more in a single phrase than is to be found in many of the contemporary volumes written in refutation of it. And while thus recognized in itself, Natural Religion obtained with the Reformed theologians its true meaning and validity as the fundamental condition and presupposition of Revealed Religion, which they always regarded as only adding a needed higher radiance to the dim light of nature. They saw clearly that these two elements of all Theology are ultimately one; that they become equally false and one-sided when separated from each other; and that their union and consummation in a complete

harmonious system, must contain all the truth possible to human reason concerning God.

And here again they differed from the Socinians in their conception of Reason, which, with the latter, was but the finite, negative, critical understanding that, by its one-sided application, has worked such havoc in the domain of religion in modern times; while with the Reformed theologians it was the higher faculty of ideas in the Platonic sense—the constructive speculative Reason (*ratio quae insitam habet Dei ideam*). The full unfolding of the Ideas it potentially contained, or could apprehend, was at least the *ideal* of the Reformed Theology as a system from the outset, and it is clearly outlined in its great masterwork, the *Institutio* of Calvin, whose first book treats *De Cognitione Dei Creatoris* before proceeding to the higher point of view of the second book, *De Cognitione Dei Redemptoris in Christo.* And whatever may be said of the narrowness of the Calvinistic system in its severe realistic interpretation of the application of grace, it has certainly no essential narrowness here in the view of modern Philosophy—its rational breadth and comprehensiveness, to say nothing of its depth, being surpassed in the age of the Reformation only by Zwingli's universal speculation. This same large and philosophical point of view is implied at least in all the great theological works of the masters of the system,

becomes a distinguishing comparative characteristic of it, and is frankly professed in many confessions of the Reformed Church, as, for example, in the very first words of the Westminster Confession concerning "The Light of Nature and the works of Creation and Providence," as so far manifesting "the goodness, wisdom, and power of God"—a cardinal truth that shines on its forehead with a clear, if carefully guarded, lustre.

Nor did the Reformed theologians confine themselves merely to vindicating the naturalness and universality of religion against the negativity and contingency of the Socinians; they even attained to a clear conception of the progressive conditions and actuality of its historical development. The principle of *the historic evolution of religion* which has come so prominently to the front during this century, especially in the Hegelian School and in consequence of Hegel's profound exposition of it, is by no means new to the Reformed Theology, which, in its own way, exhibited all the essential elements of the historic process with wonderful insight and even completeness. This was especially the work of the Federal Theology, which became the characteristic Theology of Scotland and is written on every page of the history of the Scottish Church, which goes back to Bullinger's *Compendium* of 1556, which forms the central principle of the Westminster Confession of

Faith, and which was only carried out with greater formal completeness—often, indeed, with an excess of artificial ingenuity—by Cocceius and his school. The idea of a covenant relationship between God and man, is the characteristic conception of the essence of religion in the Reformed Theology. It is the principle of a personal spiritual communion between God and man. It is essentially Biblical, as is shown again by its revival in contemporary Biblical Theology; and it was applied by the Federalists to exhibit the historical evolution of the Religion of Grace from the Paradisaic ideal of religion through a series of particular concrete advancing stages or dispensations—a general natural stage before the Law, and then a higher legal or moral stage—till it culminated in the spiritual revelation of the absolute divine love in Jesus Christ. These historical stages in the history of religion were conceived of as including within them the development of whatever was true in the Pagan and Jewish religions, and as being resumed in their absolute truth in the Christian dispensation. There is nothing deeper than this in conception, even in Hegel, who gives us at best only a philosophical reflection of it that was really alien to the Lutheran Theology, and who, with all his wonderful dialectical form, yet attained, in comparison with its spiritual intelligibility and insight, to but a confused, myoptic

vision of God. We may even say in this connection, paradoxical as it may appear, that the Contemporary Psychology, Comparative History, and Philosophy of Religion have discovered no *new principle* that is strange to the Reformed Theology in its original comprehensiveness and breadth, however valuable be the new *material* they have accumulated for the illustration and development of the Reformed system—which is indeed the only theological system known to me in which it can all find logical co-ordination and ultimate consistency.

It would have been well had the Reformed Theology kept throughout to its original idea of the evolution of the religious consciousness as the basis of its method, yet, by one of those strange inversions of attitude which have occurred so often in the history of thought, the relation of the original Reformed Theology and of the Socinian Theology to these fundamental questions has come to be confused, or even reversed, in the judgment of contemporary theologians. In consequence of the hard scholastic external formalism of the seventeenth century, and still more of the apologetic conflict with the deistical and rationalistic movement of the eighteenth century, the Reformed Theology of the time took on largely, and sometimes wholly, the Socinian method. It forgot, in the external defence of the outworks, the inwardness,

vitality, and freedom of its prime; became narrowed to the maintenance of miracle and prophecy as the outward proofs of the divine revelation to the spirit; and externalized that revelation itself into mere outward communications to reason of ideas, above reason indeed, yet cast entirely in its intellectual forms. And this continues still, to a large extent, to be the common conception of the Reformed system—a conception which can only be corrected and revised by a return to its primary sources in the age of the Reformation, and a deeper penetration into its spiritual basis and essence. On the other hand, as a singular evidence of its triumph, the modern Unitarianism has abandoned the old Socinian method of mere external historical proof, and its exclusive basis of miracle and authority; has placed itself upon the standpoint of Intuition and Natural Theology, and has been cultivating—often to rich and welcome fruitage—what is essentially the first, and only the lowest, department of the old Reformed system. But here the Reformed Theology must assert its inalienable right anew, and claim all this movement as essentially its own. And so doing, faithfully and boldly, it will assuredly find itself in harmony again with all the stirrings and unfoldings of religion everywhere in humanity, while refusing to accept the limitation of the naturalistic standpoint, in a

renewed consciousness of the depth, breadth, and endurance of its own theological foundations, as well as of the universal and thoroughly modern character of its scientific method. Whatever accidents have impeded or limited its historical development, there is certainly nothing larger or more philosophical in itself in the whole domain of Theology; and it is fortunate for us, as inheritors of it, that we can now approach it with that point of view clearly established by renewed historical research.

2. A second distinctive principle of the Reformed Theology is its constant striving after true *objective knowledge of God*, and its making the supreme conception of the living revealed God rule the whole theological system. The strength of the Reformed Theology has always been its universal and transcendent doctrine of God. In contrast to all merely subjective systems, it is predominantly and consciously objective in its theological character. It claims to know God with perfect certainty, in His essential nature and attributes and working, in so far as these have been manifested and revealed by Himself. It carries everything directly up to God, and explains everything by God, so as to be at once the completest protest against all subjective religious resting for salvation on the finite and the creaturely,

and the completest elucidation of the ultimate meaning and significance of the finite universe and human life in their absolute dependence on God alone. This is the basis of its synthetic and speculative character. Contemporary thought is ever realizing more painfully the inadequacy of a merely subjective religion, and the futility even of a science or philosophy of religion that deals only with its empirical or historical phenomena, without reaching their ultimate and absolute ground in God. Mere religious subjectivity, so prevalent in modern times as to be held by many to be characteristic of Protestantism, has been found of itself so variable, empty, and uncertain, that we are now threatened with a universal agnosticism as the outcome, in utter despair of objective theological truth. It is at this point where the return to the original Theology of the Reformed Church obtains its greatest urgency, and where its revival in the present century has its deepest significance. That Theology has ever been distinctively Theocentric, or as we might rather call it Thearchic; and in its strong, clear, universal exhibition of the idea of God as intelligibly manifested everywhere in the world, and as culminating by an inherent necessity and certainty in the Christian revelation of redemption, lies its inestimable and incomparable value for us still.

It is impossible even to indicate in a few words

the significance of this position, which will have to be the subject of careful and continued study, through which it will be our constant aim to rise to the full apprehension and application of it. The whole renewed study of the Reformed Theology in this century has come clearly to this position, and here we have definite, unquestionable progress that compares most favourably with all other contemporary cultivation of Theology. The objective theological principle of the Reformed Theology—commonly called its material principle as distinguished from the subjective principle of the Lutheran Theology—has been variously formulated in connection with the recent comparative study of the systems. Thus Schweizer defines it, in the terms of Schleiermacher's definition of all religion, as "the absolute dependence of man upon God alone, with constant protestation against all Paganism or idolatry of the creature in religion." Baur gives it, in accordance with his manner, a more purely objective rendering, as "the idea of the sole causality of God absolutely determining all things," while he contrasts it unfavourably in this abstract inadequate form with the anthropological principle of Luther. Finally, Scholten, revising their definitions, has formulated it, in terms with which we are more familiar, as "the absolute sovereignty of God in the natural and moral world, and especially the absolute sovereignty of His free

grace as the only ground of human salvation." It may seem almost startling to find that these elaborate and philosophical discussions by men of the widest theological knowledge, with every problem and issue of contemporary Theology in view, have come round again to this; and that, after seeming to have wandered furthest away, we have only completed the theological circle and find ourselves again at the old home! Yet so it is; but we have returned to it enriched with the new wealth of other climes, and after having seen all the glory of other skies; and the old familiar things and surroundings and personalities, while ever more dear, acquire thereby a larger and wider significance than before.

What Zwingli and the founders of the Reformed Theology, including John Knox, essentially did, was to purify the Christian consciousness of God by purging it of its corrupting Pagan idolatrous elements in the Roman Church, thereby restoring it to its primitive simplicity and personal direct relationship through Christ to God; and, in doing so, they not only secured the pure original Christian faith again for the new time, but gave it a universal modern expression. What was new and distinctive in their theological conception, even in comparison with Augustine, was the greater clearness with which they apprehended and represented the

whole existing universe in all its parts, in all its constituents, in all its ongoings, as a manifestation of God in the exhibition and realization of His glory through it. *Finis existentiae hujus mundi est manifestatio gloriae divinae.* The whole finite world was thus emancipated from the ancient Pagan dualism, and immediately assumed a diviner meaning in all its forms and happenings. Wherever and however presented or discovered, it exhibited God in its least elements as well as in its mightiest masses, so that in the view of the Reformed theologians nowhere could anything be found in existence or event, however apparently independent or antagonistic or repulsive or mean, that had any existence away from God, or ever ceased, however it might be changed or modified or reconstructed, to manifest God and His glory on its own stage of being and in its own way.

Nor was the glory thus manifested a mere general splendour shining over things as a whole. It entered so completely into them all as to determine their very nature, in consequence of their being posited through and through by God according to His own thought and will; and their final cause was just the manifestation of that thought and will, or the glory of His own determining activity—His decree—which gave it existence, form, and order. A blade of grass, a particle of matter,

thus immediately proves God, according to the simple categories of causality, essence, and manifestation; and the Reformed theologians set forth this position in its clearest light. Undoubtedly this universal theism was encumbered with enormous difficulties—indeed, with every possible difficulty—at every point and all through, but nothing short of it can satisfy the modern mind; and the whole system of the Reformed theologians was just developed in the special form it took to meet these difficulties, which they most courageously faced, and to show how the Christian revelation in their interpretation of it entirely overcame them. They viewed the world from beginning to end as a divine teleological system. The manifestation of the glory of God in the created medium that reflected it, and which in so doing showed forth His activity or the attribute on which it was dependent, progressed in a regulated order, so that it rose from lower to higher stages, ever manifesting correspondingly higher attributes in God, until it reached the highest stage of all, when the pervading and universal purpose of the whole was consciously realized in return to God and participation in His own absolute eternal life. God was thus known through all things that are made or that come to pass; but He is only truly and perfectly known in the reality of His highest purpose, which embraces

all else in it and finally explains all things. With strict logic the Reformed theologians analyzed and co-related the stages in this universal process—creation or nature, general providence or history, and special and most special providence or redemption—and distinguished clearly the kind and degree of the divine manifestation in each, so that the whole order of the universe was theologically interpretated by them in a complete and consistent system. The ultimate consummation of the world-plan was clearly seen to be reached in man, who was created in the image of God Himself as the crown of the finite creation—the microcosmus, as Calvin (following the ancient philosophers and the mediæval theologians) calls him—who thereby became capable in a complete, free, finite consciousness of not only manifesting the glory of God in its highest form, but of *knowing* that glory to be God's, and thereby realizing the whole final purpose in intimate spiritual communion with the absolute God—whom Zwingli, following Aristotle, calls the ἐντελέχεια καὶ ἐνέργεια of all things.

The whole manifestation of God in the world was further specially conceived—and this is the theological standpoint proper—as directed to the awaking and developing of the subjective germ or potentiality of religion in man, so that the objective principle was the co-ordinated complement

of the subjective principle, and religion was represented as the living synthesis of these two elements. But the process of development, when it starts on its final stage in man, is interrupted and deflected by sin, because the two elements, in virtue of the very prerogative assigned to man in virtue of his special creation, are at first but externally, and not yet essentially, one. Yet this falling away only brings in a new and higher form of the manifestation of God, namely, the immediate revelation of His eternal love and the inner nature of His own absolute personality. It was at this point where the Reformed theologians found the historical fact of the revealed religion of redemption, not only as coming in and unfolded throughout the whole of Scripture, and supremely in Jesus Christ, but as necessarily crowning the whole mediate manifestation of God in nature, which was reflected in natural religion; and they worked these two constituents of their system together with wonderful dialectical art and completeness. It was this that gave their systems their imposing logical order and power.

The whole process of the world was thus viewed by the theologians of the Reformed Church, as founded upon an ideal eternal purpose of God, which was realized by His own self-activity through it, and it is ultimately consummated by the giving

of His own life in love through His eternal Son, the Logos, Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, to the elect sons of men. The essence of this conception of the world was undoubtedly the doctrine of the eternal Decrees of God, and especially the decree of Predestination and Election, a doctrine which, derived from Paul through Augustine, and shared at first by Luther and the Lutheran Church, has been carried out with complete consistency and insight only by the theologians of the Reformed Church. It constituted their distinctive type of doctrine and their characteristic mode of thought. Their chief interest in it arose from their finding in it a ground of ultimate *certainty* for their faith in God and for the redemption realized in Christ, as the final end and consummation of the whole world-plan. Redemption and eternal life, while specially revealed, thus threw their higher and fuller light back on the whole system of the world, and gave it ultimate consistency and intelligibility. This was basing the fact and certainty of the Christian redemption on the widest possible ground. The whole purpose of the world, wherever and however manifested, converged in it, and established it, so that the logical predestinarian found himself everywhere firmly planted and secure with ever present evidence of his faith. The pain of the system arose from its dualistic issue, of which the Reformed theologians

were intensely conscious, so that Calvin himself in contemplating the decree of Reprobation—while sternly facing it, because he believed he found it in Scripture and saw it authenticated in experience—yet shrinks sensitively from it, calling it a "*decretum horribile.*" And notwithstanding the various modifications of the Infralapsarians, Hypothetical Universalists, and Arminians, the Reformed Church continued to cling to it as an insuperable fact, and explained it in the only way possible logically, as yet manifesting the sovereign justice of God. But in spite of this dualistic issue, the Reformed theologians rose to the highest conception attained in the Church of the eternal Trinitarian life of God, and the immanence of that life—not indeed, as the Pantheists of their time held, in the lower ranges of creation, which were utterly incapable of receiving it, because not yet fashioned into the condition of conscious reciprocity and communion with it. It only could be, and was, immanent in the redeemed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the crowning consummation of the whole world-process by which it was carried up into complete unity with God. And here it was where the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the ultimate certification of the revelation of redemption was found as the ground of highest personal certainty—a certainty in the believer himself, and not founded upon mere priestly authority, as with the Romanists, nor upon mere

external evidence, as with the Socinians, nor upon mere subjective conviction, as with the Lutherans, but upon the immediate consciousness of the working of the Divine Spirit upon the personality of the redeemed in efficacious, irresistible grace.

And so, in harmony with their whole interpretation of the divine order of the world, *grace* became the crowning word in the Reformed system, the highest expression of God's absolute self-activity in the world, the key not only to personal salvation but to the meaning of the whole universe, and even to the thought and will and heart of God—"of Whom, and through Whom, and to Whom are all things." From this standpoint of grace the whole Theology of the Reformed Church and its special doctrines were deliberately unfolded and determined. The breadth and sweep of their mode of thinking enabled the Reformed theologians to rise with clearer vision into the sphere of transcendent being—not with the rationalistic hesitation of the Socinians, nor with the mystical confusion of the Lutherans, but with a most intelligible Christology and atonement, that led to a trust in Christ as the eternal Prophet, Priest, and King of the New Covenant, of the most personal kind that nothing could shake. No wonder that, when thus felt and realized amid the struggle and sorrow of life, the Reformed theologians clung to this faith as dearer to them than life itself; that by it the Reformed Church

everywhere grew strong and triumphed over persecution and death, like the Church of the early days; and that out of it sprang a pure, true, devout humanity, the living witness to the absolute sovereignty, the free grace, and the eternal glory of God in the assured realization of His redemption.

This idea of God, which may be truly called the very "sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches," thus most faintly indicated, is not dead, nor even dying, as so many around us seem to suppose. It has shone and is shining still, though often distorted and shorn of its splendour, through many a later mode of thought that has ignored or repudiated it; and far from being left behind, it is everywhere reviving again amid the new intellectual strivings of the time. It has been the glory of the Reformed Church in the past, and it is still instinct with an indestructible vitality in all the branches of that Church as the bearer and organizer of the divine life it sustains. The system of doctrine founded upon it, is the only system in which the whole order of the world is brought into a rational unity with the doctrine of grace, and in which the glorification of God is carried out with absolute completeness. All other systems either fit into it as constituent parts or modifications, or are refuted in their own particularity by their setting up a position inconsistent with the

absolute sovereignty of God and man's entire dependence for salvation upon His free grace alone. The Church that builds upon this rock of the revealed absolute will of God, upon His unfailing eternal purpose in Jesus Christ, can never be moved. As the system was developed by the Reformed Theologians in opposition to all denial or false conception of God in their time, so it must be developed again in these relations in our time. It is only with such a universal conception of God, established in a living way, that we can face, with hope of complete conquest, all the spiritual dangers and terrors of our time—Atheism, Agnosticism, Materialism, Pantheism, Pessimism, Nihilism; but it is deep enough and large enough and divine enough, rightly understood, to confront them and do battle with them all in vindication of the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the World, and of the Justice and Love of the Divine Personality.

Undoubtedly the system requires new development and exposition, especially on its ethical side, that it may be again brought more fruitfully to bear upon the whole practical work of the Church and all the new social problems of the time. But while admitting this, it is yet manifestly at one with the whole trend of contemporary science, which is again becoming more alive to religion, and all the intellectual forces of the time seem setting in its

direction. As it gave the world of nature purified from pagan and mediaeval superstition into the young hands of Modern Science, as the ordered work of the power and wisdom of God, so Modern Science is giving it back God's work again, as even more manifestive, more orderly, more purposeful, more evolutional, than its first expounders ever dreamed of. So, too, the Historical Sciences, advancing from the wider cosmic order to the moral order in time, are joining hands with the Reformed Theology in giving that higher order a larger and grander demonstration. What is the vast accumulating material of Modern Science, confusing to simple faith as at first it may be, but a new, elaborate, endless commentary on Calvin's profound thesis: *Mundus in spectaculum gloriae Dei conditus est?* And to the distracted Ethics of our time, the Reformed Theology comes again with its supreme principle so familiarly formulated in the words taught us in our childhood: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever"—no solitary or exceptional definition of our Shorter Catechism, as even Carlyle was led to suppose, but the fundamental commonplace of the Reformed system from the very outset: *Deus est summum bonum quo frui debemus.* And not merely on its ethical, but also on its intellectual side, is it thoroughly philosophical and ultimately speculative, moving with the deepest insight and the loftiest flight through the

whole scale of being, from its lowest to its highest. It thus gathers into itself all science; is open and receptive to all truth; and aims at the reconciliation of all knowledge and all life in one comprehensive and universal system, whose last conclusion is the certitude of the Christian redemption, and whose one end is the glorification of God in all and through all. It is therefore entirely in place when it still claims, as of old, to be the highest knowledge, and to crown the academic life as the *Regina Scientiarum*, the Queen of the whole intellectual realm.

My apology and plea for the Reformed Theology, in presence of the other theological tendencies of the time, have been founded upon the two most general and fundamental points of view that can be taken: the universality of its basis in human nature, as the condition of its method; and the universality of its conception of God, as the ground of its absolute truth. The special task to which it is now set, is to unfold its specific doctrines of grace in harmony with these positions, especially by the aid of the new Biblical and Historical Theology, so as to give them thereby their largest and deepest expression. The genius of the Reformed Theology will not admit of its resting in mere universalities, or evaporating into general formulas; its distinctive tendency is to the differentiation of the universal, and to the most

individual realization of the faith. It is no mere theoretical speculation, but immediately confronts the practical problems of the religious life with all the strength and light of the Christian revelation. It still moves in the sadly real world of universal sin and death, and its consciousness of grace has all its meaning and application in relation thereto. As there is nothing in the modern view of the world inconsistent with it, none of its old sources of consolation are either done away or are less needed by the heart of man than they ever were. Its solemn view of life and its severe ethical spirit are being intensified again by the very pessimism and secularism of our time, and its whole purpose is still the demonstration of the Gospel of Christ as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The aim of the Reformed Church, of which it is the scientific minister and interpreter, is undoubtedly the production of a free community of spiritual faith and life, arising out of the individual realization of salvation through Jesus Christ, at once co-extensive with the whole order of society, and entirely superseding the old mediaeval system which it has reformed, and to which, with its increasing knowledge of itself, it can never possibly return. Its movement is ever forwards, carrying the inherent adaptability of the original Christian faith ever more clearly into all the new modes of thought and new

social organizations that may arise. Nor with its all-conquering reason and its missionary ardour will it ever rest till it has guided the Church to its social consummation—a new harmonious organization of all the activities and interests of life and of the whole political and social order in the universal Kingdom of God.

But if any one warmed by another conviction, or mayhap chilled by the faithless coldness of the time, still questions this hopefulness, or repudiates the system entirely, he will probably point to the abstract and lifeless form in which it still survives, to its historical variations and divisions, to its old, bitter controversies and intolerant spirit, to its metaphysical and moral contradictions, its anthropomorphic conception of the divine purpose and the dualism of its issue, to its apparently failing supremacy, and even its threatened displacement by other modes of thought more immediately responsive to the free, varied, and independent activity of our time. To such I would reply that these are only so many occasions and elements calling and pressing for its living renovation and further development, for the integration of its differences into a new unity, for comprehensive and conciliatory treatment of its variations, and for the removal of everything that would fetter or impede its proper movement of

advance. This development of it is indeed the very work laid to the hands of our Scottish Theology at present, which is again stirring with a new life and quick with the spirit of progress as never before. As it seems to me, the chief peril now threatening it, is not its supposed repudiation or refutation by modern science, but the more unheeded danger that it may be seduced from the old tried paths to wander away after the more ephemeral and meretricious novelties of the hour. While it is important that our Theology should be continually enriched and enlarged by the assimilation of all new truth that is cognate to it, come whence and how it may, it is equally important that it be kept moving on its own lines, and be preserved from the chaos of unrelated ideas that are alien to the special form of the Christian life of our people and their proper habits of thought. And undoubtedly this will best be achieved by carrying forward the theological development in harmony with the great fundamental principles and the unexhausted resources of the received system. Progress will thus become genuinely historical and continuous; it will proceed at once in living sympathy with the actual movement of the Church, and be pregnant with new practical achievements—"without haste, without rest," and without the danger or the shock of utterly untried or uncertain experiments.

A peculiar responsibility rests at this hour upon the Scottish branch of the Reformed Church, from the unique position which she may be said now to occupy, not in geographical position merely, but in her living embodiment of the faith, between the parent Reformed Churches in the Old World and their youngest offspring in the New. She is the one original Church of the Reformation, in which the distinctively Reformed faith most livingly and purely survives. It is a sacred trust, a holy inheritance, which we do well jealously to guard, as the form of the faith consecrated to us by the heroism of our reformers, the blood of our martyrs, and the fervent piety that has so long purified and elevated, hallowed and glorified our Scottish life. But we shall best show our reverence and love for it, not by restraining its more generous impulses, but by quickening it with a new vitality, expanding it in accordance with its own inherent principles, and thus adapting it to exercise the same enlightening and inspiring influence in our time as it did in the great days of old. The Reformed Theology itself is assuredly capable of such development; and notwithstanding all the remaining distraction of her ecclesiastical conflicts and the intense clinging still to accidental matters of detail, the Scottish Church is peculiarly fitted for carrying on this necessary work, by her combination of steadfast tradition with

vigorous vitality, by her very variety in unity, her free constitution, and the large intelligence of her people. And in fact this process of theological development is actually proceeding even now in many forms, in our midst; nor will it rest until it has worked out the fundamental principles of Zwingli and Bullinger, of Calvin and John Knox, to the larger issues which they involved, when the struggles and conflicts of the past—the conditions of historical continuity and purified vitality—will be at once justified and glorified in their harmonious consummation.

May it be ours to take some small share in this important work of preparing theologically for the future triumph and closer reunion of our Reformed Church, with an appreciative gratitude for its great traditions, with continued loyalty to their best spirit, with unabated faith and hope and love. Notwithstanding the pessimistic note of the hour, the close of the century is full of promise for the Reformed Theology, and through all the confusions and uncertainties of the time the new century that is almost dawning upon us appears destined to bring in at last its larger and fuller development. So far from having reached the age of decrepitude and decline, the Reformed Theology, like the Reformed Church itself, is still moving as yet only through the stage of her early youth, and is but beginning

to organize herself into the full, free life of manhood. She comes to you to-day still unworn with all her conflicts, and yet fresh with unexhausted strength, fitted, as in earlier days, to quicken the youngest enthusiasm and to sustain the strongest endeavour. To the Reformed Theology, as she again presents herself to us in her present strivings and tendencies, may well be applied the noble words of her own great poet, John Milton, addressed in an hour of deep conflict and trial to the genius of his country: "Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eye at the full mid-day beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means."

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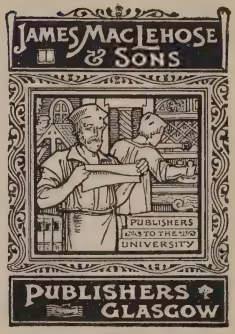

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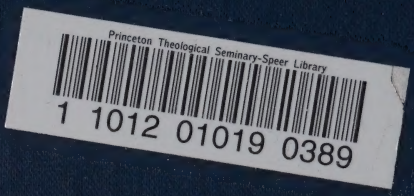
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